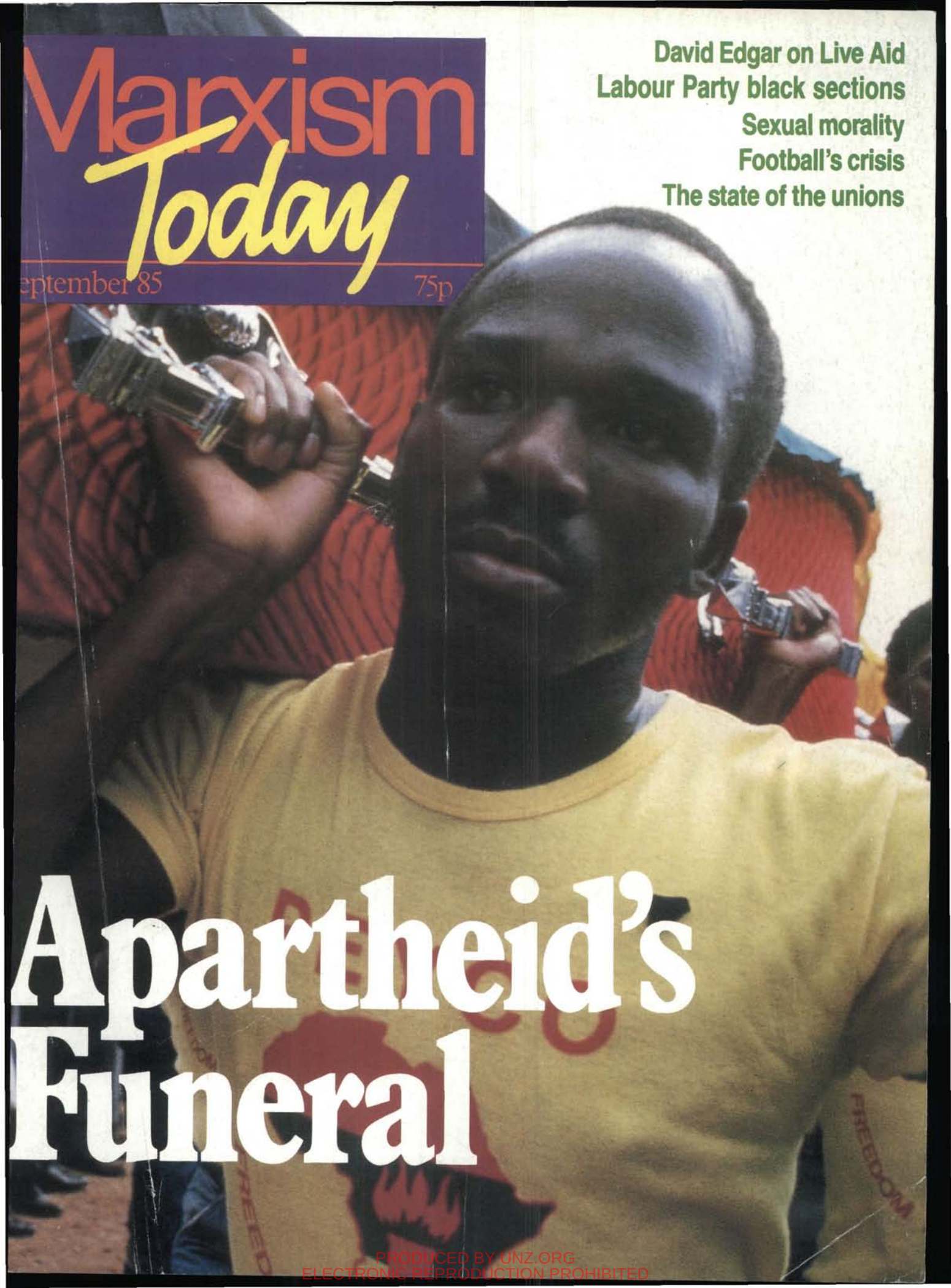
Marxism Today
eptember 85 75p

David Edgar on Live Aid
Labour Party black sections
Sexual morality
Football's crisis
The state of the unions



Apartheid's Funeral

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London's ethnic diversity is an asset. Yet, held back by racism, discrimination, racial disadvantage and deprivation, the black and other ethnic minority communities are prevented from realising their full potential in society. This is currently a fact of life – but one which the Greater London Council is helping to eradicate.

In 1981 the Council established the Ethnic Minorities Committee as a major committee of the Council supported by an Ethnic Minorities Unit. Since then the Committee has initiated a wide range of activities designed to meet their overall objectives of combatting racism, avoiding race discrimination and ensuring that the Council takes direct action at all times to secure race equality in London.

In line with their objectives, a number of publications have been produced:

1. The GLC's work to assist Ethnic Minorities
2. Race Equality and Ethnic Minorities in London – Future Strategy Report 1983–85
3. Ethnic Minorities and the abolition of the GLC
4. Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966:
   Take-up by London Local Authorites for Non-Educational Uses
5. The Role of Section 11 workers:
   Report of the Conference 27 January 198
6. Challenging Racism in London
   Report of the Conference 12 March 1983
7. Anti-Apartheid Declaration Launch – Ceremonial Booklet
8. Conference on Aid to Black Businesses ar Community Enterprises 19 March 1983
9. Anti-Racist Work in the Independent Voluntary Sector
10. Rastafarianism in Greater London
11. What can I do to Challenge Racism?

If you want to know more about Anti-Racist Year or obtain copies of the above publications, please write to: Ethnic Minorities Unit, Room 686a, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB.

LONDON AGAINST RACISM

GLC
Working for London

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Theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party

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SO HERE'S THE PLAN: WE GET PAST SECURITY, GO STRAIGHT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE, SAY WERE FROM JOHNSON MATTHEY - AND HE GIVES US £250 MILLION
BANK OF ENGLAND

3 FOCUS
Two cheers for democracy · Something old, something new . . . · Uganda's torment · The Johnson Matthey affair ·

FEATURES

9 Apartheid's Crumbling Bastions · Jonathan Steele
South Africa has erupted. It has become almost, but not quite, ungovernable. Is this the beginning of the end?

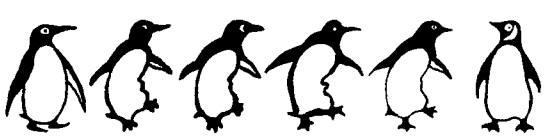
14 The Unions: Fighting on New Terrain · A Roundtable Discussion
Six years on the defensive is a long time. But the political levy ballots suggest the future *could* be different.

21 Sex and Morals – Rearming the Left · Lucy Bland
When it comes to sexual morality, the moral Right is making the running. But the Left is unclear about its own position.

26 Why Aid Came Alive · David Edgar
Live Aid is one of the most important political developments of the 80s. And who would ever have guessed? But can the Left grasp its significance?

31 Black Sections: Radical demand . . . or Distraction? A Roundtable Discussion
Suddenly black politics is making headline news. Or at least, black sections in the Labour Party are.

37 CHANNEL 5
Own Goals and Penalties — Alan Bairner
Penguin's Progress — Ken Worpole
The Quality of Mersey — Ian Williams



46 REVIEWS
Mailer's Pen is Bigger than the Norm — John McVicar
Sex Symbols — Frank Mort
Immigrant Husbands — Fiona Mactaggart

50 VIEWPOINT
Irene Bruegel and Ariane Hegewisch — Part-time work
Paul Thompson — Militant's machine
Monty Johnstone — History le sons

53 LETTERS

56 UPDATE

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GOING FOR GROWTH

Can you help MARXISM TODAY break new ground?

SPECIAL PROMOTION APPEAL

Marxism Today

Editorial office: 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY Telephone 01-608 0265

Dear reader

Marxism Today has reached a new sales threshold. Over the past few months the magazine has enjoyed special prominence in the media stemming from its assessment of the miners' strike, its coverage of the campaign against rate capping, and its role in shaping the debates currently taking place on the Left.

Marxism Today's political impact has been matched by a steady, and in the last period dramatic, rise in sales. Nevertheless it is clear that the magazine is still not reaching anything like its potential readership.

We need to break new ground. For this we need your support, to help win the increased circulation that will in turn be translated into new sections, regular supplements, and a bigger and better magazine.

We are planning to launch a major promotion this Autumn, for which we need to raise at least £5,000. We are appealing for donations and supporting subscriptions from readers to help us achieve a much faster rate of growth than we enjoy at present.

The objectives of this special campaign are clearly defined. This Spring we passed the 13,000 sales mark. We plan to reach 15,000 next year and expand the magazine accordingly. This Autumn we hope to extend Marxism Today's distribution to smaller newsagents, while consolidating our gains elsewhere.

Your donation will be very welcome. And rest assured that your money will be well spent.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Jacques
Editor

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Please complete the reply coupon and return (no stamp needed) to: Marxism Today Promotion, Freepost, 16 St John Street, London EC1B 1JB.

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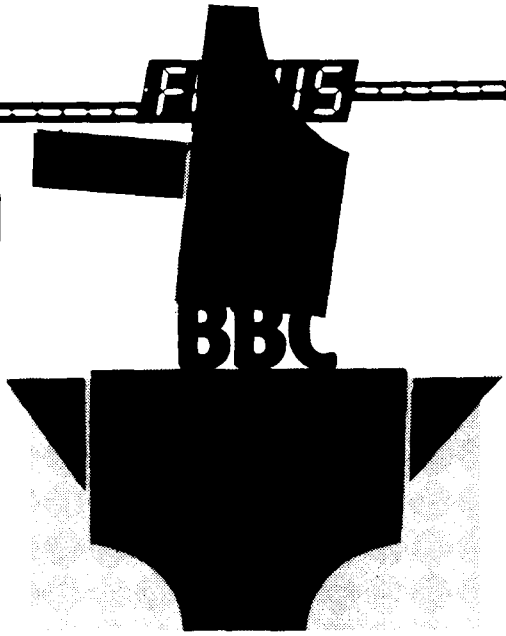
TWO CHEERS FOR DEMOCRACY



was inevitable that the BBC and the
natcher government should get across each
:her. Thatcherism is a determined attempt
) destroy the cosy consensus which has
ominated British politics for the last 30 years
id more. The BBC as an institution and in its
olicies is dedicated to the concept of the
onsensus.

The first occasion when a confrontation
ith the BBC was narrowly averted was
uring the Falklands war, when the Corpora-
on's current affairs programmes briefly
ew down Thatcher's displeasure. But then
e BBC (like the ITV companies) decided that
had to go along with what was felt to be
ne mood of the nation' and uncritically
ined in the euphoria which it did so much
elf to feed. What it surrendered on that
casion was the right of a broadcasting
stitution with claims to be independent to
ve expression to important critical voices
ithin our society.

That the confrontation, when it came,
ould have been over Northern Ireland was
ot surprising. Northern Ireland is the site
here British colonial policy and its methods
the methods of repression tested and tried
Kenya, Cyprus and Aden – were transfer-
d in an alarming way to home territory. It
as therefore been the aim of successive
itish governments to apply pressures to
sure that British viewers and listeners were
enied a clear view of the situation there and
the reasons for the continued struggle of
e Republican movement. In this they have
en greatly helped by the BBC and its
stem of internal censorship and by the
3C's willingness – with one eye on the
ence fee – to restrict its coverage. But
ternal censorship and threats about the
ence fee are a very different matter from
rect government intervention aimed at
eventing the broadcasting of a specific
ogramme. By his letter, which no amount
post facto prevarication can show to be
her than a wish to see the programme
anned, the Home Secretary applied a press-
e which exposed the contradictions within
e BBC.

On the one hand there was the Board of
overnors, that totally unrepresentative
ody drawn from the safest quarters of the
tablishment, and its chairman, an account-
nt with a brother in the cabinet. Its reaction
with one honourable exception – was to
an the programme: an action which has
nce, by a kind of topsy-turvy logic, been
scribed as an action in defence of the BBC's editorial independence. On the other, there was the Board of Management, composed – in part at least – of professional broadcasters who were aware of the dissatisfaction among the current affairs staff at restraints on normal journalistic practices. The journalists, for their part, perceived the intervention of the Home Secretary and the connivance of the Governors in stopping the programme as a threat to freedom of information – a perception which was shared by journalists in ITN and the ITV companies. The decision of these journalists to strike was an event of considerable political importance. The presence of some unexpected faces on the picket lines and the fact that the staff in Bush House, home of the BBC's External Services, came out shows how deeply they felt the danger of Brittan's intervention.

It has always been said that the BBC would respond to any threat to its freedom from the government by inviting the minister responsible to formally ban the programme. It is a measure of the collaborationist spirit of the Governors that they did not live up to this tradition. It is sadly typical of the BBC that the Director General has agreed to fudge the issue by postponing transmission of the programme till some unspecified date, by which time changes will have been made to it. Evidence of IRA terrorism will it seems now be included. What about evidence of Protestant killings or evidence of state violence for that matter?

So it is a case of two cheers for democracy and for the journalists. There is talk of revised procedures to deal with terrorism. Does this mean a tightening of control? The NUJ will no doubt be on their guard and ready to challenge any such development. They can be encouraged by the evidence from opinion polling that a large section of the public is behind them.

Stuart Hood

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW . . .

The new TUC-Labour Party pamphlet on economic policy tries too hard not to offend anyone. As a result, the final, much-leaked, appearance of *A New Partnership – A New Britain* pleases few. It has been criticised both for abandoning established policy and for failing to break with old positions.

One widespread criticism – the vagueness and generality of the document – is certainly well merited. For example, it argues for 'common' European industrial strategies and for a co-ordinated economic expansion in Europe, while managing not to mention the EEC. Again, *A New Partnership* alludes to the very advanced TUC-Labour Party document on planning and industrial democracy published in 1982 – but without repeating any of the detailed proposals made at that time. There is a rejection of the present privatisation drive but nothing for or against specific renationalisations.

The vagueness continues on two issues which go to the heart of relations between the unions and the Labour Party. Firstly, there is a commitment to replace Tory anti-union laws, but it is just not clear what with. It *is* said that there will not be a simple repeal, that is, there will be no return to the pre-Thatcher position. Tory laws are to be replaced by as yet unspecified Labour ones.

There is a second question mark over income policy. It is recognised that statutory norms and government imposed wage restraint will not work. Apart from that, we are only told that there will be 'a new approach to the distribution of income and wealth'. What will that be? It is suggested, without being stated, that voluntary wage bargaining targets will be on the agenda of a 'national economic summit'.

In all these cases it is pretty easy to read between the lines of *A New Partnership*. One can detect, for example, some anguished but unstated concern on the coming crisis of public sector pay. Six years (and more) of stringent cash limits have led to many huge discrepancies between public sector and private sector wage levels. Any post-Thatcher government will obviously be under enormous pressure to correct these imbalances. Just as obviously any full and rapid correction would absorb all the resources likely to be available to government even in the most favourable conditions. One can infer that a Kinnock government would try to trade permanent comparability mechanisms for substantial public sector pay restraint. But

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N Kinnock, N Willis and L Whitty launch *'A New Partnership – A New Britain*

nothing is actually said.

When one reads between the lines, *A New Partnership* must be seen as evacuating many of the more ambitious policy positions taken by the movement in recent years. But, of course, the pressures for such adjustments are very real. The example of France shows that the continuing international crisis tightly constrains national strategies for high economic growth. Politically, many of the most far reaching demands of the alternative economic strategy never found a popular response, but remained the exclusive property of labour movement activists. Some accommodation of policies was necessary.

What must be regretted is the purely electoral, 'pragmatic' spirit in which policy is being changed and the backward-looking nature of the changes. The demand management exercises which collapsed so completely in the 70s continue to exert a gravitational pull on the thinking of the labour movement's leadership. For example, the only policy on which *A New Partnership* is explicit is a programme of public investment in infrastructure. Nothing at all wrong with that – such a programme is necessary – but it is a policy safely shared with the SDP-Liberal Alliance, the Tory wets and the CBI, and it can't do much more than dent the unemployment figures.

The continuing preoccupation with a Keynesian demand expansion is in spite of the fact that Labour Party economists recognise that it would fail to even cut by half existing unemployment and that the international financial situation has never been so unfavourable to such measures.

Nevertheless *A New Partnership* does have some strengths. One is a sharp critique and rejection of existing policies. A second is the central priority given to job creation and raising the lowest incomes. What is missing is a longer term strategic perspective. In spite of the phrase 'A New Britain', there is no focused picture of the British economy in the future, nor of the new productive systems we should be aiming to build. On this key political and economic theme, the national leadership of the labout movement is still far from matching the imagination and analytical reach shown, at a local level, in the industrial strategy of the GLC.

John Grahl

● UGANDA'S TORMENT

The palace coup which removed Milt Obote from power in Uganda last month h cracked the bankrupt pattern of po independence neo-colonial Uganda politi The implications of the power struggle no underway between the two military grou are continent-wide.

The two Obote regimes, like Amin's, we characterised by deep dependence on t support of Britain and other western powe for murderous military repression and fla rant economic exploitation of Uganda's pe ple. The details of horrific torture and d gradation practised under Obote and Am are comparable with the practices of Na war criminals and have been documente many times.

The military junta which seized power the end of July is not a new regime. Its Prim Minister Paulo Muwanga is the most skilfu ruthless and determined politician in Uga da. He was the power of the last Obo regime. The military leaders General Ti Okello and Lt General Bazilio Okello we responsible for the military who carried o the appalling actions against childre women and men which terrorised the cou try for the last four years under Obote.

Predictably this group has easily coopte all the weaker opponents of the Obo regime – the sizeable Democratic Party leaders, armed bandit groups nominally loy to such notorious figures from the Ami period as Brigadier Moses Ali, and a host c well-known opportunist politicians happy t slot into ministerial appointments in Kampa la on the basis of personal links any tim there is a shift in the personalities at the to In the same strategy of consolidating the power in Kampala the junta has tried t persuade individual leaders of the Nationa Resistance Army guerrillas to join the scram ble for office.

But the NRA has become a formidabl force for a new era of politics in Uganda, nc for 'turmoil without change' as its leade Yoweri Museveni recently put it.

The July coup by Okello's soldiers too place against the background of the in creasingly successful guerrilla war by th NRA. The guerrillas held the Luwero triangl north of Kampala and a significant area i the west of the country throughout 1984/5 The government army (UNLA) was in creasingly reluctant to engage them. Th NRA took the western town of Fort Porta with no resistance in the last week of July. Fo the UNLA commanders it was the signal t

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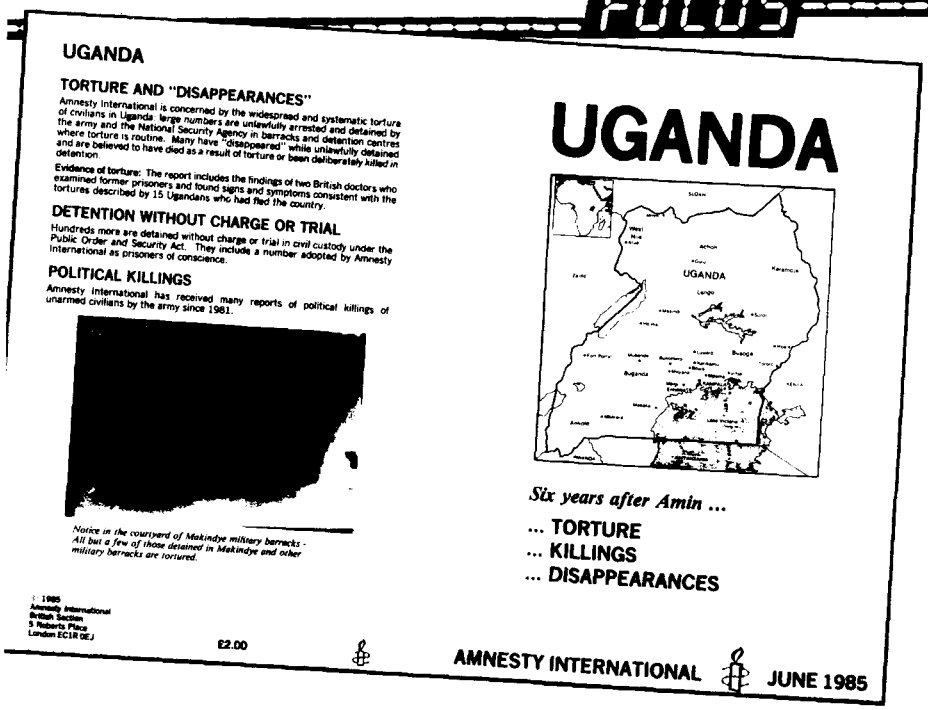
UGANDA
TORTURE AND "DISAPPEARANCES"
Amnesty International is concerned by the widespread and systematic torture of civilians in Uganda. large numbers are unlawfully arrested and detained by the army and the National Security Agency in barracks and detention centres where torture is routine. Many have "disappeared" while unlawfully detained and are believed to have died as a result of torture or been deliberately killed in detention.
Evidence of torture: The report includes the findings of two British doctors who examined former prisoners and found signs and symptoms consistent with the tortures described by 15 Ugandans who had fled the country.
DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL
Hundreds more are detained without charge or trial in civil custody under the Public Order and Security Act. They include a number adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience.
POLITICAL KILLINGS
Amnesty International has received many reports of political killings of unarmed civilians by the army since 1981.
Notice in the courtyard of Makindye military barracks - All but a few of those detained in Makindye and other military barracks are tortured.
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UGANDA
Six years after Amin ...
... TORTURE
... KILLINGS
... DISAPPEARANCES
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
JUNE 1985

tch Obote in the hope of pre-empting an RA march on Kampala which could have iggered the humiliating collapse of the NLA and a repeat of 1979 when Amin's overnment army simply ran away or joined ıe tail of the incoming army from Tanzania.

Yoweri Museveni, defence minister in the ıort-lived democratic Uganda National Li-eration Front (UNLF) government of 1979/), started the war on February 6 1981 after ıe rigged election scrupulously organised by aulo Muwanga returned Obote to power. luseveni, largely because of intra-left rivalry ithin the UNLF leadership, had made the iistake of joining the Military Commission d by Muwanga which overthrew the UNLF ıd paved the way for the election.

But he was out-manoeuvred by Muwanga ıd humiliated at the polls. Museveni went to the bush with 27 rifles and a handful of ngry young men saying they were going to ght for democracy. Very little material or iplomatic support came from outside. The /est was backing Obote and most African aders were sympathetic to his brave return om exile and content to believe that Amin's legacy' or 'tribal problems' made ome repression an ugly necessity.

The myth that tribal rivalries lay behind)bote's failure to reconcile the country after ıe overthrow of Amin is convenient for ıose who want business as usual restored in ıis rich and strategically placed country. A etter explanation was recently advanced by luseveni: 'The single biggest factor (of the ivil war) is the under-development of our roductive forces . . . this has mainly come bout as a result of the unequal and parasitic elationship that has existed between Africa and foreign interests from the fifteenth century. While other people are exploring space the majority of the African people are going with bare feet, are under-fed, mal-nourished, victims of easily curable diseases, live in poor housing, have no clean water, have got the highest infant mortality rate etc . . . These are man-made problems which could be rectified if there was a competent authority to instigate the corrective process. The democratic revolution must tackle the problem of under-development if it is to have any meaning. To end under-development we must first and foremost end dependence in politics and the economy.'

Great pressures have been brought on Museveni by neighbouring countries to join the Muwanga/Okello government in the hope of a swift end to the civil war and to regional instability. The NRA made a big concession to this pressure by agreeing to meet UNLA leader Lt-General Bazilio Okello *ahead* of the junta appointing a cabinet. But the public record of the junta's lack of good faith during these early contacts has swung some African leaders' sympathy for NRA's principled populist stand. Whatever the immediate outcome of the NRA/UNLA contacts, the nationalist politics of the NRA is back on the Uganda agenda. And, as in neighbouring Sudan where a similar pre-emptive palace coup took place against Nimeiry in April under the pressure of Colonel John Garang's southern guerrilla army, it is only possible for the West to stem the rise of African nationalism against neo-colonialism for a limited period.

Victoria Brittain

THE JOHNSON MATTHEY AFFAIR

If you read about Johnson Matthey Bankers last year, when the saga began, the story was straightforward. A small, fast growing bank with inexperienced management incurred large losses and had to be rescued by the Bank of England when no private buyer could be found and the bank's major shareholder, Charter Consolidated, decided to walk away from the mess. In the wake of the collapse of Continental Illinois in the United States, the Bank of England was left with no alternative to nationalisation, firstly, because of the paramount importance of maintaining the integrity of the banking system and secondly, because Johnson Matthey was also a member of the gold market and no-one wanted that to migrate to Switzerland.

Move forward a couple of months and the complacent belief in the innate superiority of Britain's system of banking supervision, and its much vaunted capacity for quick thinking and quick action, had changed; and the story with it. The banks, merchant banks and members of the gold market had put up most of the money for the rescue. They quickly became unhappy with the (in their view) disproportionate burdens they were being asked to shoulder compared to those of the shareholders and the Bank of England. Once they learnt that the Bank had had, or should have had, its suspicions aroused some months previously, they felt rather more strongly about being asked to accept responsibility for other people's incompetence. So they spoke to David Owen and thus transformed the story from a City horror to a Whitehall soap opera which has now gathered a walk-on cast of hit-men, 'businessmen' and libel lawyers.

Johnson Matthey Bankers (JMB) was a small bank. Its loan book was barely 1% of the size of, say, Barclay's. Its status was that of a bank, rather than one of the second class institutions that are merely 'licensed to take deposits'. As a bank it was assumed to be competent and not to need close supervision by the Bank of England.

Yet with the best will in the world it would be difficult to exonerate the Bank. Its 'definitive' version of events is contained in its annual report. There, it said, it found no evidence of fraud, merely a high degree of incompetence: by JMB for concentrating its lending on two risky companies; by the bank's auditors, Arthur Young, for failing to notice that JMB's exposure to these loans was under-estimated by a half; and by the Bank of England's supervision department.

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SO HERE'S THE PLAN: WE GET PAST SECURITY, GO STRAIGHT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE, SAY WE'RE FROM JOHNSON MATTHEY – AND HE GIVES US £250 MILLION
BANK OF ENGLAND

March returns, due in mid-April, were not received until June; and the Bank did not then manage to meet JMB to discuss the worsening situation until August.

Barely six weeks after publishing this account, the Bank called in the fraud squad. Such a performance would do little credit to a bottom rung social services department; and how much less for the reputation of the supple, sensitive, responsive form of supervision for which the Bank of England is famed.

There has been an enquiry by senior Treasury and Bank of England officials. They have recommended the kind of sensible reforms of which the president of Belgium's Commission Bancaire has said, 'Prepare for bank failure, in the sense that at the moment when one does fail, Parliament will demand change. Instead of having to ennact somewhat rash legislation, prepare one, have it in your back drawer and present it when opportunity necessitates.'

Without two further factors, however, it is unlikely that the story would have rolled on for nearly a year. For the startling fact is that neither the Conservative Party nor the Government nor the City has done more than offer grudging support to the Bank of England. For an institution which is the Government's outpost in the City and the City's spokesperson with the Government such a situation needs explaining.

The Government's side is simple. It has been embarrassed politically by the discipline of 'market forces' seeming to apply to industry but not to finance; secondly, the Chancellor of the Exchequer feels he has been inadequately consulted and blames the Bank for his having made a misleading statement to the House of Commons on the level of public funds involved in the rescue; and thirdly, there is little love lost between the Chancellor and the Bank's deputy governor whose long held doubts about Mr Lawson's method of measuring monetary aggregates have long been vindicated. Of these three the first is true but unavoidable; the second is true but irrelevant, for having nationalised JMB the Bank of England was bound to be liable for any debts that subsequently emerged. Only the third remains.

The City's withholding of support is more complex. In part, the clearing banks feel the Bank of England has not represented them very well. This Government, they remember, imposed a windfall profits tax on them and last year, much to their dismay, forced them to levy a composite rate tax on bank deposits. In part, it is because JMB's collapse came at the worst moment for an industry gearing up to sell every conceivable financial service without any unmanageable conflicts of interest; and all to be supervised by the practitioners themselves.

Taken together with malpractice at Lloyds, the insurance market, the JMB debacle has dealt, as the *Financial Times* argues, 'a serious blow to the City's claims to be regulated on its own terms'. Or would have done, if it were not for the alternative: the supine inactivity of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Public Prosecutions when faced with evidence of financial sharp practice.

Furthermore, the financial community is not as robust as it was before the problem of Third World debt was acknowledged. The Bank of England and other banks and central banks throughout the world have been trying to winch the system back to health. This year, for example, the Bank of England allowed British banks to strengthen their capital base by raising more than $3.5 billion in non-equity perpetual loans, which, unusually, it said could count as primary capital.

Individual banks will thereby be able to expand their lending (and in theory their earnings and profits); but many of the buyers of these perpetual loans have been fellow financial institutions. Should the world economy move into recession or the loans turn bad, the risk will still be concentrated within the financial community and these large capital ratios will turn out not to have been bulwarks and not to have strengthened the banking system at all.

Already the credit rating of many banks has slipped. Solvent countries, such as Sweden, and blue chip companies can actually borrow money in the world's capital markets more cheaply than banks which tend increasingly not to make large loans, but instead to arrange for companies like I to borrow their money directly from depos tors. The banks earn a fee for their service, f what they are essentially doing is to enab their clients to make repeated borrowings f short periods over the medium term b guaranteeing that the money will be fortl coming should the markets turn sour, or th company's performance slacken.

When a bank makes a loan, it allocates to some of its capital in case the debt prove bad. But the beauty (or the danger) of thes fashionable new devices like note issuanc facilities, currency swaps and interest rat swaps is that banks do not have to allocat scarce capital to these underwriting commi ments. They can, instead, expand their earr ings as if there were no risk attached; an they have. Last year some $80 billion c swaps and $17.4 billion of Euronote issuanc facilities (up from $0.4 billion in 1980) wer arranged.

For banks trying to bolster their capita their reserves and to increase their earning and profits, the surface attractions of accu mulating hitherto unquantified risks are con siderable. For the banking system and it supervisors (and the Bank of England ha moved more decisively in this area than othe central banks) the problem is acute. Trying t limit risk suggests restrictions; but to b restrictive is to ensure that banks' earnings profits and capital will increase but slowly.

Which brings us back to JMB, the Bank o England and the banking community's si lence. For the disquieting thought remain that if the Bank has difficulties supervising a small, uncomplicated bank, its judgemen may be questionable in other less clear-cut but no less important, areas.

Peter Parke

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Sponsor a holiday for a sacked miner and family

Nearly 700 miners have been sacked for their part in the miners strike. For them, a year without income has been followed by losing their jobs. For these miners and their families, a holiday, though much needed, is out of the question.

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The apartheid regime is now under its greatest-ever threat. Parts of South Africa have become virtually ungovernable. The government's reform strategy is in tatters.

Apartheid's Crumbling Bastions

Jonathan Steele

1985. Trade unionist, Andries Raditsela's funeral

THE CURRENT UPSURGE in black revolt in South Africa is unprecedented. Never before has the country experienced such a wave of strikes, boycotts, street demonstrations, and reprisals against blacks who collaborate with the apartheid system. The present challenge to the apartheid state differs from previous crises in a number of significant ways.

First, the amount of separate protests is more widespread than ever before. Across the length and breadth of South Africa black communities of every group – African, Indian, and so-called Coloureds – have taken action. Second, the protests are better organised. Week-long boycotts of white businesses, such as the one which has paralysed Port Elisabeth, require a high degree of local unity and co-ordination. Rent strikes, bus boycotts, and stayaways from school need similar mobilisation.

Third, they are more political than before. Blacks have successfully destroyed the apartheid-supporting local administrations in numerous townships by persuading or forcing councillors to resign. The Soweto disturbances of 1976 hit at the symbols of white control – the attempt to enforce the Afrikaans language in schools, and the government-subsidised local beerhalls – but the new protests go to the heart of one of the key mechanisms for maintaining apartheid, the co-option and corruption of blacks to serve in local government.

Fourth, the protests are more closely linked to industrial militancy, as African workers have gone on strike or occupied workplaces in a number of areas. Fifth, they are more 'military'. The skills of making petrol bombs and building barricades have been spreading and parts of some townships or in a few places whole townships have become 'no-go areas'. The army and police can only enter with armoured vehicles and routine foot-patrolling has become impossible. Because of the shortage of weapons available to blacks the army and police have not yet come up against sniper fire or sustained fire, but it may be only a matter of time before this happens. The African National Congress has urged black policemen to prepare to 'turn your guns against your masters' and to smuggle weapons out of the government's armouries.

Another Iran?

While the scale and sophistication of the black rebellion has increased dramatically since the last upsurge in 1980, morale on the white minority's side has never been weaker. President Botha's efforts to bring in a series of 'reforms', such as the setting up of parliamentary chambers for Indians and Coloureds, were intended to split the black community, and persuade international opinion to give Pretoria more time. They have served only to split the Afrikaaner community as it sees precious shibboleths under challenge.

The regime's response to the latest protests of imposing a State of Emergency, arresting 1,500 people in a few days, giving the police orders to shoot to kill and encouraging the growth of officially-condoned assassination teams or 'death squads' – a Latin American phenomenon new in South Africa – has shown its traditional recourse to severe repression at the slightest provocation. Some of the regime's Western backers, most notably the French government, have even begun to question the system's stability. France has become the first Western government to distance itself from Pretoria by imposing limited economic sanctions.

It is not surprising that at its recent conference in Zambia, the ANC's leading figures, dominated numerically now by members of the 'Soweto generation' who went abroad for training after the 1976 events, decided that the movement should no longer prepare only for protracted people's war. A general insurrection was a possibility, remote still, but no longer just a theoretical option at some unforeseeable date.

Some activists have compared the situation to the weeks before the fall of the Shah in Iran, if only to suggest that events in South Africa have become so fluid that all previous scenarios for change must be revised. Differences from Iran can of course easily be noted. The South African army, both its officers and its white conscripts, are still on the side of the regime, and will not switch loyalties as suddenly as the Shah's army. The South African ruling class is still solidly against power-sharing and will continue to support Botha. His is not a personal regime. Nevertheless, the range of black protest, and the isolation of the white minority could crack its willingness to resist at some unpredictable but not so distant moment. While still not high, the possibility cannot wholly be discounted.

Reforms that backfired

The effectiveness of the current protest movement has its origins in the second half of the 1970s when thousands of African workers began to form 'unregistered' trade unions. Divisions among the business community, with some entrepreneurs pushing for a more settled, trainable, black labour force instead of the migrant system, combined with the rapid growth of the economy to weaken ruling-class resistance to the formation of trade unions. In 1979

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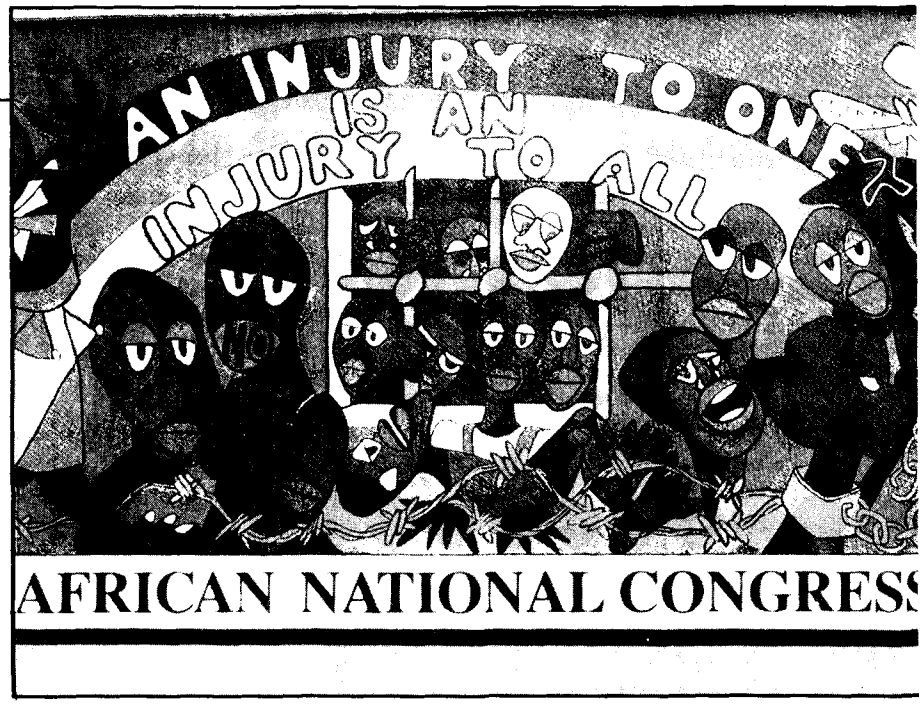

the government-appointed Wiehahn Commission recommended that in order to stabilise this trend, black trade unions should be legalised. At the same time the regime tightened up the system of 'influx control' under which the supply of labour to the economy is enforced through the compulsory carrying of passes by Africans. New rules gave security of tenure to those urban blacks who had lived for some time in the townships reserved for Africans on the edge of white cities but forced employers to dismiss workers who had no legal residence rights. They were expelled to the countryside, to the so-called 'homelands', the largely unproductive 13% of South Africa's territory which has been set aside for Africans. Whites have the best 87%. The aim was to split the black population and create a minority of relatively privileged urban blacks with higher earnings, and a stake in the system, but still no political rights.

In the early 1980s the plan began to collapse as the world recession and the collapse in the gold price hit the South African economy. Layoffs of black workers, rising inflation in the cities, and the illogicalities and barbarity of the mass resettlement of thousands in the homelands produced a general mood of frustration which over-rode the regime's efforts to split the black population.

In 1983 the Botha regime unintentionally gave a new impetus to political protest by pushing ahead with a number of administrative and constitutional changes designed further to divide the black community. A shift from the whites-only Westminster parliamentary system towards a three-chamber arrangement for whites, Indians, and Coloureds offered the African majority nothing. Under the Black Local Authorities Act which came into force in August that year all they were given was the chance for urban Africans to have local government.

The two measures reaffirmed in the most dramatic way the fact that in spite of all the talk of 'reform' apartheid was to be enshrined and made permanent for the foreseeable future. The only positive element was that in order to present the outside world with a facade of democracy the regime provided for elections under the new arrangments.

The elections became a focus for mobilising mass opposition to apartheid. It was a classic case of an imposed 'reform' which backfired, – somewhat similar to the 1972 Pearce Commission in Rhodesia, the nationwide consultative process suggested by Britain, which was meant to show that Africans were grateful for concessions negotiated by Ian Smith and Sir Alec Douglas Home but in practice allowed the nationalist movement to mobilise resistance throughout the country.

The emergence of the UDF

To coordinate opposition a new organisation called the United Democratic Front was formed in August 1983. The UDF brought together some 400 groups (grown now to 700) comprising civic associations, trade union branches, women's organisations, cultural associations, and religious groups. It included people from the various ethnic communities. A majority of Indians and Coloureds refused to be co-opted by the Botha scheme. They felt the new Assemblies were a meaningless sop and they rejected the exclusion of the African population. The once-powerful Natal Indian Congress was revived and a similar Indian body was formed in the Transvaal. Many in the Coloured community were angered by the Coloured Labour Party's acceptance of Botha's scheme and mobilised Coloured opposition to it. The UDF decided to campaign for a boycott of the promised elections.

The first local elections to black community councils were held in November 1983, and were an immediate success for the boycott campaign. Only 60,000 people voted in Soweto out of a population of close to 2 million. The next August the turn-out in the elections for the Indian and Coloured Assemblies was less than 20%.

The result was a humiliation for the regime and a triumph for the black majority. It reinforced the authority of the UDF and its constituent organisations. They gained new strength for their local struggles against rent increases, high fares, under-funded local schools, and workplace grievances. The diversity and den: ty of the new political activism, the emer ence of community newspapers and unde ground leaflets, and the number of sma scale victories in trade union campaign each one adding a new sence of militancy spite of the regime's harrassment of UD leaders, was not adequately reported in tl international media, giving a false sense quiet when the reality was an unpr cedented degree of nationwide politicis tion.

At each outburst of black protest tl regime responded with repression, b only inspired more protest. Last August a precursor to the State of Emergen recently imposed in 36 areas of Sou Africa, the police minister, Mr Louis I Grange, tried to deal with a wave of riotir over rent and fare increases by banning ar meeting of more than two people discu sing politics 'or which is in protest again or in support or in memoriam of anything The ban covered most of the Vaal triangl an important industrial area south Johannesburg.

In October the minister announced th regular army units would be employe increasingly to support the police. The went into Soweto, and three Vaal triang townships, one of them Sharpeville, tl scene of South Africa's most notorio shooting of unarmed black protester House-to-house searches led to 3 arrests.

In response to these measures, the trac unions decided to protest. Along with civ groups they organised a two-day stayaw in most industrial areas of the Wi watersrand to condemn the arrests of con munity leaders and the rise in rents ar utility charges. The Association of Chan bers of Commerce conceded that betwe 75% and 100% of the African workfor

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ıd responded to the stay-away call. Two ıys later management dismissed 90% of ıe workforce of the Sasolberg coal-to-oil lant for supporting the stayaway. Five ade union leaders were arrested.

In March this year the police struck hard gain when they stopped using tear-gas ıd rubber-bullets over protests in the astern Cape. They used live ammunition a funeral procession in Uitenhage, and illed 20 people.

Since September last year more than 500 lacks have been killed, and 10,000 people etained. The State of Emergency only xtends a new formal cover to a *de facto* attern of cracking down on protest which as been in operation for several months. fter the earlier arrest of the UDF's 16 top aders, the emergency is being used to ound up most of the second-rank leaders f the UDF, and as many of their local ctivists and community leaders as have ot gone underground. The number of rrests could well go as high as 2-3,000.

he challenge facing the ANC

or the oldest African organisation, the frican National Congress, the resurgence f defiant political activity inside South frica has provided both reassurance and a allenge. Founded in 1912, the ANC was ble to operate legally for many years. But hen the regime cracked down on most lack political organisations in 1960-1, the NC went underground and turned to rmed struggle. While the ANC must be ncouraged by the new political turmoil, ıe danger is that it might find itself olated because of its long years under-round and in exile. On the positive side is ıe evidence that Nelson Mandela, its nprisoned president, has remained in the yes of thousands of people, including a ounger generation who never knew the NC in its pre-exile days, as the repre-ntative of majority aspirations. The NC's green, yellow and black banner ppears regularly at funerals and other ıass occasions.

Its strategy of 'armed propaganda', as it escribes the campaign of spectacular ssaults on key installations such as the asolberg plant or the Koeberg nuclear actor, helped to keep the organisation in ıe limelight as a powerful symbol of sistance, however small its numbers of rmed militants still was in the early 1980s. t the same time the ANC benefited from shift of position in the section of the frican community, led by Steve Biko, hich advocated black power and black onsciousness in the late 1970s, and re-cted collaboration with other ethnic groups. The regime's banning of all black consciousness organisations in 1977 and the imprisonment of some of their leaders brought them into contact with the ANC in exile or in prison, and differences between them have lessened. The ANC's class analysis of South African society has tended to prevail over the emphasis on race, preferred by the black consciousness movement. The regime's (unsuccessful) efforts to transform a system based on race differentiation into one primarily based on class have also strengthened the ANC's ideological position.

It can now be seen that the setback of last year's Nkomati accord between South Africa and Mozambique under which the ANC was forced to stop sending armed fighters through Mozambique had one good side-effect. In the short term, it

the ANC must also engage itself with the black trade union movement

obliged the ANC to send more cadres into South Africa and increase its operations there, so as to show that Nkomati had not been a crippling military blow, only a diplomatic defeat. In the long term it removed the psychological cushion which a foreign sanctuary and foreign bases can provide, and made everyone in the ANC aware that the armed struggle in South Africa would have to proceed differently from any previous liberation struggle in Southern Africa. Algeria, rather than Angola, was the nearest model.

The challenge facing the ANC is obvious. As a whole range of geographical fronts opens up against the regime, the ANC must try to gain a foothold in all of them. It must build up its underground cells over a vast new area of operations which will tax its reserves of manpower and its ability to recruit. If it fails, it will not be able to give the swelling popular movement the political direction it would like.

But it must also protect the local autonomy of the UDF's hundreds of constituent branches, both in order to preserve their spontaneity and guard them from complete banning. The regime is putting the UDF's leadership on trial for alleged links with the ANC, in an effort to blur the distinction between the above-ground political struggle and the armed struggle.

Black trade unions

The ANC must also engage itself with the black trade union movement which now, for the first time in South African history, has more members than the white unions. Over 300,000 blacks are union members. Neither of the two main trade union federations has affiliated to the UDF. Some believe it is too middle-class. Others are more concerned with particular industrial grievances.

The larger, multi-racial Federation of South African Trade Unions is closer in spirit to the ANC, while the Council of Unions of South Africa is more in tune with black consciousness. But as the crisis sharpens, these differences may become less relevant, since black trade unionism in South Africa cannot be steered easily into purely economic channels. The Vaal triangle stayaway last November was both a political and economic protest. In June this year the entire workforce at a Volkswagen factory struck because management wanted to offer minibuses for the now cancelled tour of South Africa by the New Zealand rugby tour.

At its conference in Zambia in June, the first consultative meeting since 1969, the ANC debated what strategy to take towards the neglected area of the 'homelands' or Bantustans. These so-called independent territories have tended to be written off as irrelevant politically, the 'dumping-grounds' for surplus labour unwanted by the white economy. Repression has been growing there too, in some measure more severely than in 'white' South Africa, perhaps because fewer restraints operate such as press scrutiny and the desire to present a face of 'reform'. Trade unions have been banned in the Ciskei, and in 1983 the authorities there attempted to end a boycott of buses caused by higher fares by unleashing a campaign of terror in which 90 people were killed and 100 detained.

The Transkei, the first of the 'homelands', has been under a state of emergency for almost all of its existence. More than 450 people were detained there in July while the authorities in the 'white' Republic were arresting over 1,000 under their own state of emergency. The ANC conference decided to enlarge its activity in the Bantustans, partly because their nominal 'independence' makes it potentially harder for Pretoria to intervene there should a radical government emerge.

Political perspectives

The main focus for ANC growth is likely to be the urban townships. Its call for them to be made 'ungovernable' has come to pass with astonishing rapidity. Pressure on councillors to resign, plus threats of repris-

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als against those who do not, have resulted in the disbanding of 36 of the 38 councils which had the largest measure of autonomy under the government's devolution scheme. Local policemen have also come under attack. More than 50 have been killed in the last year.

One of the most urgent issues is the role of the new 'people's committees' which the ANC has called on activists to set up in every neighbourhood block in the vacuum left by the collapse of township administration. These are what the ANC calls 'the embryos of people's power'. In many places they have begun to operate already. Some have political functions in making demands for rent reductions, some are little more than organisations for keeping streets clean, and some – the seeds of popular militias – are providing security for local underground political leaders.

The ANC conference in June discussed whether these people's committees should try to become administrative organs. It felt that in the absence of an early seizure of power throughout South Africa, they could not sustain themselves without a tax base. This might lead to a discrediting of 'people's power'. Instead the committees are being advised to act as political representatives of the community and enlarge their demands on municipal and wider authorities.

Faced with the increasing uneasiness of the regime, the ANC is having to confront the growing possibility of negotiations. So far the regime has resisted offering this except if the ANC calls off the armed struggle. Semi-official emissaries from Pretoria have approached the ANC's exile headquarters in Lusaka with the message. The same word has been passed from the Reagan administration via the government of Mozambique.

At some point unconditional negotiations may be on offer. The European Economic Community governments have called for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela, and for talks to start. In advance of this the ANC has been reemphasising the Freedom Charter, which was originally drawn up in 1955 in the days when the liberation struggle still had a non-violent strategy of passive resistance. At its recent conference in Zambia the ANC opened its top ranks to all ethnic groups in South Africa, and elected one white, two Indians and two Coloureds.

Both moves are designed to stress the national-democratic character of the coming revolution. The Freedom Charter is seen as an all-embracing banner round which broad sections of the South African population, including whites, can rally. The ANC has called on whites to resist conscription. It has reminded black traders and the black middle class that they will prosper more once apartheid is removed because restrictions on their small businesses will disappear with it. The Freedom Charter contains a general call for nationalisation of the mines, the banks, and monopoly industry, and for redistribution of the land, but says nothing about the class character of the power structure which will replace apartheid.

Civil war unlikely

For the moment the ANC's priority is to decide what tactics to adopt for extending the political scope of the present unrest. The ANC leadership has come under pressure from younger militants who want to take the armed struggle further into the white community. Most 'armed propaganda' attacks on economic targets or security force headquarters have so far taken place at night to avoid casualties. This has increased the chance of saboteurs being caught, especially when they have to break curfews. Some are arguing that daylight attacks, even with a greater risk of casualties, give greater protection to the mobile guerrilla units by allowing them to disappear in the crowd. There is also pressure for outright revenge, given that the police and army have shot hundreds of black protesters in recent weeks.

> it seems certain that a state of semi-ungovernability will prevail in most black townships

So far the ANC leadership has restrained its more militant cadres. The Zambia conference produced a strong vote of confidence in the old, exile leadership. Although more than half the 250 delegates represented the 'Soweto generation', they did not put any of their number on to the expanded 30-member national executive. Delegates were asked to nominate any 27 members they liked, but the younger group chose to keep the existing leadership virtually intact in what amounted to an endorsement of the ANC's successful strategy until now.

Predictions about the shape of events in South Africa over the next few months would be rash. While the regime is under unprecedented pressure from inside, it is also facing a dramatic reduction in inve tors' confidence. In the first quarter of th year 2,871 million rands left the countr up 50% from 1,975 millions in the la quarter of 1984, and almost ten times th 336 million rands which flowed out in th first quarter of 1984. France's move i becoming the first major Western goverr ment to take economic sanctions again South Africa, and steps in the Unite States Congress to take a similar line hav shaken investors.

The fiasco of Botha's mid-Augu speech has made the regime's predicamer worse. Its Western backers had hoped h would produce a laundry-list of reform clear enough for them to argue that th government deserved to be given mor time. But his narrow-minded, die-har approach, claiming that 'white Sout Africa' would never commit suicide, re vealed the true nature of the Botha prog ramme. Foreign pressure for change bound to increase, business confidence ha been further dented with unprecedente calls by local industrialists for Botha t resign, and the African majority has bee confirmed in its belief that even the avenu to negotiated power-sharing will remai closed unless resistance is expanded an enlarged.

The regime has faced investor panic and domestic unrest before, and manage to stabilise the situation a few month later. Even the present crisis will probabl be contained. But it seems certain that state of semi-ungovernability will preva in most black townships for the foreseeabl future. It seems certain, too, that the scal of organised armed resistance by black will grow, even though it is no match fo the vast armoury of the regime. Soutl Africa is a long way from being in a state o civil war.

The immediate key is probably in th hands of the black trade unions. In n other recent Third World rebellion has th industrial working class been as well orga nised and highly motivated as South Afri ca's black proletariat. Last autumn's suc cessful stayaway in the Vaal triangle coul herald the shape of things to come.

Wide-ranging economic sanctions, ever if applied by all of South Africa's busines partners, would take time to work. Thei initial effect is likely to be symbolic a much as practical. The future of Soutl Africa will not be decided by outsiders bu by the African majority. The most effec tive sanction is the withdrawal of Africar labour. It would hit the regime at it weakest point, and have immediate im pact. □

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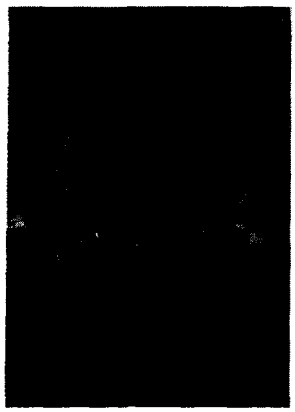

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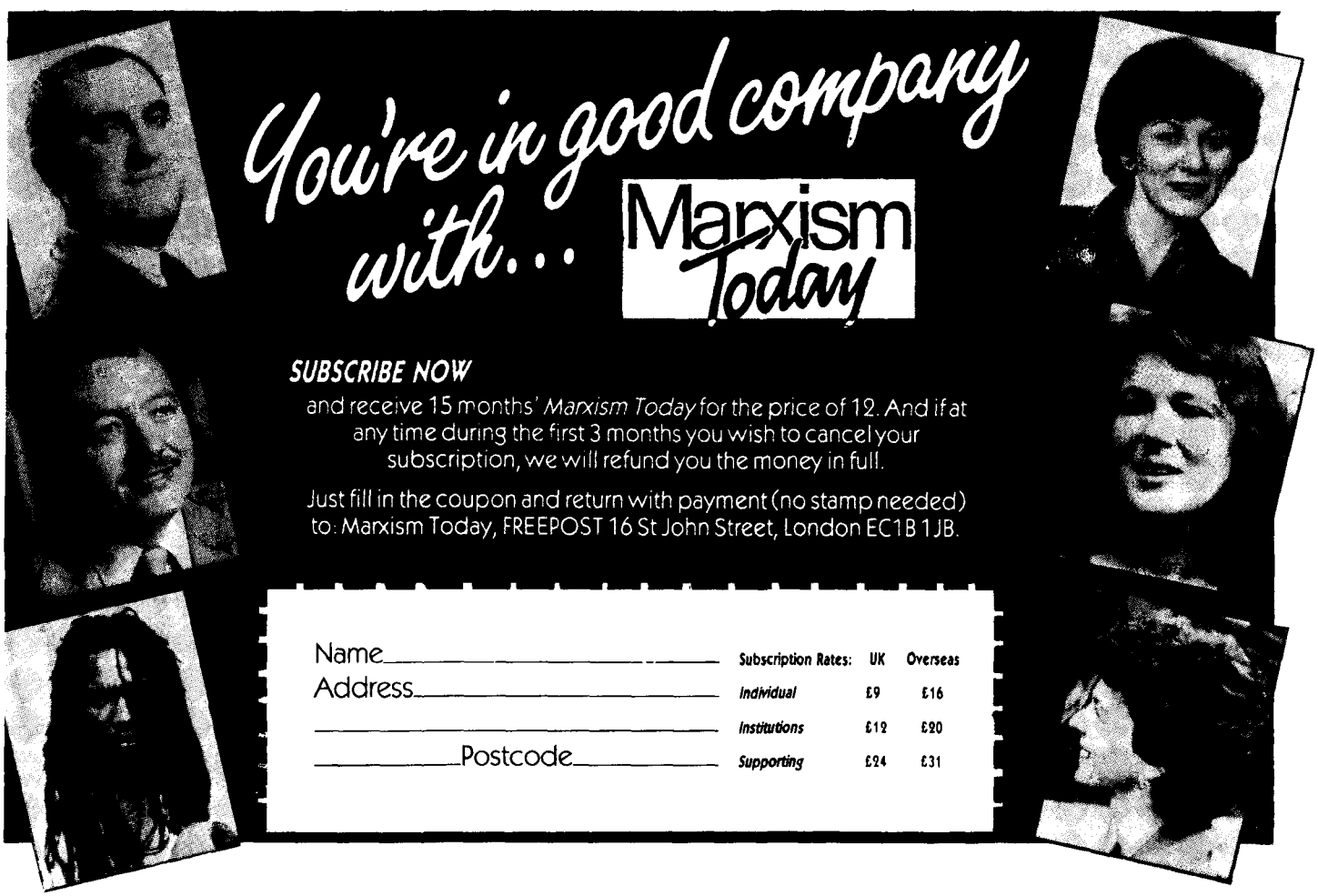
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'Democracy' has backfired for the Tories. The political levy ballots have surprised everyone. But serious divisions are opening up in the TUC.

THE Unions: FIGHTING ON NEW TERRAIN

A roundtable discussion

The participants in the roundtable are: Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees and a member of the TUC General Council; Campbell Christie, deputy general secretary of the Society of Civil and Public Servants and general secretary designate of the Scottish TUC; and Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen and member of the TUC General Council. It is chaired by Trevor Hyett, a freelance television presenter specialising in trade union affairs.

It's very important to acknowledge that the last six years has seen us all in political and industrial retreat. The question is why?

Rodney Bickerstaffe I don't necessarily accept that we've been in retreat. There have been setbacks, we've got to accept that. But to give the impression that the labour and trade union movement has been flying away from the enemy would not be true. 1982 – the longest ever strike in the National Health Service. 1983 – the first ever national strike of the water and sewage industry. I wouldn't accept we are in retreat. The fact is that we are not winning, but we are not running away.

Campbell Christie The trade unions have been under attack, but that is very different from being in retreat. It's been a key element of the Thatcherite philosophy, that to achieve the sort of society they want, they must weaken the ability of the trade union movement to defend workers' conditions. We have to learn lessons from being under attack, and when we move forward we need to ensure that we can't be attacked in the same way in the future. That is the challenge the movement has to pick up.

Jimmy Knapp We've been preoccupied with defending our people against these attacks. Rodney has highlighted some of the major fights that have taken place, and we must add to that the miners strike. We've all been preoccupied with fighting to defend our people against the ravages of the Government's economic policy and that has impaired our ability to move forward on alternative arguments. We've been so preoccupied with trying to support the miners, trying to support the health service workers; I don't think we've succeeded in getting the message across that there is an alternative strategy. And that's been one of Thatcher's main strengths, she has been able to claim that this is the only way.

Do you see Thatcherism just as old Toryism in old clothes, or somethir quite new, needing a different response from the trade union movement

Jimmy It's old Toryism in much more subtle clothes. Tl legislation is much more subtle than it was in 1971, very cleve giving the unions back to their members and all that type of thin That's created problems for us. We've got to work out how t respond to the clever and subtle way that they've changed societ – allowing people to buy their council houses and so on.

You say that you've got to work out how to respond. That suggests th thus far there has been no adequate response. And it's on th ideological ground that I'm interested to know your opinions.

Rodney If you're talking about point scoring in PR term there's no doubt about it, that from 1979 onwards the Tor government, with all their machinery and with all their friend did a pretty good job. We've got to accept that. But I don't thin they really changed underlying attitudes. Come the political fun ballots, come the need for industrial action, and whatever suppor there was for the miners, you could see that there was a substanti element of working people who, whilst they may even have vote for the Tories in 1979, and possibly even in 1983, were going to b loyal to what they perceive as the old working class values. I don'

think there's been a massive ideological shift in respect of many o our members.

How do you interpret the fact that only a little over a third of trad union members are reported to have voted for the Labour Party in th last election? There has been something. You are saying that it's no been deep-seated. But certainly, superficially at least, there has been a desertion.

Jimmy I believe that this is where we need to destroy the subtleties of Tory policy, that makes people believe that if you buy your council house you're something completely different, if you have shares in the National Freight Corporation you're something different to what you used to be. And the Left has got to recognise all that. We've got to counter those subtleties.

Campbell I would like to dispute with Jimmy that we're facing old Toryism in more subtle clothing. It's a different form of Toryism that we're facing. But I think people are now recognising that. In the 1983 election the full evils of what Thatcher was about hadn't been recognised and the Falklands factor overrode. But people are now seeing it for what it is. We should recognise,

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owever, it is a different form of Toryism. They don't believe in onsensus, they want to get rid of the welfare state, they don't elieve in trade unionism, they want to have trade union ıembership in Britain down to about 15% of workers. If we are alking in terms of postwar Toryism, then it's a different kind of oryism.

odney Their approach on the law has been new and subtle. hey have argued that no one is above the law. It is a step by step pproach which people can understand; they can see how the ricks form the wall. But, almost too late, they are beginning to ee that the wall is something that they don't want. We saw that oming out in the mining dispute, increasingly people saw the way he 1980, 1982 and 1984 Acts were being used and abused by the overnment and others. Although step by step it had seemed fine nd logical, they suddenly realised and words started popping ut, sometimes incorrectly, words like fascism, totalitarianism. eople understood, when GCHQ came along, that the Govern- ıent was taking a position which was beyond law and beyond ıoral law, and increasingly they're hearing of the Government brogating international and European norms. They are now eeing that this rule of law idea has been used to abuse working eople and their families and I think they are going to get their omeuppance on it.

Jimmy Knapp

ut they didn't get their comeuppance during the miners' strike. There he rule of law was a very heavy weapon at the time, in administering r coralling the miners' strike.

odney But we're now seeing some of the responses. They're acking off in the court cases.

ut that is to do with individual miners. How do you all evaluate the iners' strike? For example, do you see it as a victory, do you think the iners won?

immy I don't think it was a defeat in the political sense. I don't hink the Government won a Falklands factor out of it.

hat's saying they didn't achieve the top score.

immy Politically I don't think it was a defeat. If we go into the ndustrial aspects, that raises other issues. But politically, there is perception in the public mind now that it was unfair, they didn't lay the game.

ampbell Jimmy is right, the Tories have not won a political victory. People are recognising, with MacGregor's insistance that 20,000 jobs must go. And this is what the miners were saying. But leaving that aside, what are the lasting political consequences of the strike? The Government have lost out in two respects. One is that they have been seen to be vicious and vindictive in the way they sought to screw people down into the ground. There's a political backlash against them. Secondly, the miners' strike, because it was about jobs, raised unemployment as an issue in people's minds. It's no accident, if you look at the polls now, that unemployment rates so highly. The miners' action put jobs firmly on the agenda.

Jimmy The miners' strike and the political fund ballots have created the foundation for a political fightback. The miners' strike activated thousands of people and got them involved in the fight. I'm not talking about the leaders of trade unions. I'm talking about women who had never before ventured outside their homes, for the want of a better expression, but became involved, became active. And the political fund ballot has done the same for thousands of rank and file trade unionists. There's a basis there now we can build on.

I accept that. But I still would like us to gauge frankly some of the failures that we have to deal with, and how we are going to repair those so that they don't happen again. For example, I think that anybody who was actively involved in the miners' strike would say over a few pints, actually it was disappointing, the kind of support we got, both in the broad sense and within the trade union movement. Not for the lack of people trying, like those round this table, but in fact on the day, the solidarity actions from within the trade union movement were pretty minimal. What have we learned from that?

Rodney I don't think that's new Trevor, is it?

Compared with the 1970s.

Rodney Well go back, within my own sphere, to the 1971 dirty jobs strike, so called, the 1973 hospital ancillary strike, the 1974 nurses' dispute, the 1978-79 winter of discontent, and even the 1982 health workers' strike, there wasn't total working class solidarity. The fact is that we have never ever been able solidly to get it together, and not just in the last two, three or four years, not just because of Thatcherism. As a trade union movement how often have we put it all together in the way that no government could withstand it, or that no employer could withstand it?

Let me put it a different way then. Haven't the trade unions had less ability than in the past to muster their membership? Jimmy, I'll turn to you specifically, the NUR in their one-day strike on one-man tube trains, we can't say it was a 100% success can we?

Jimmy No . . . and the *Sun* put it much more bluntly than that!

But there are certain mythic things that have happened in the past, like Saltley Gates, that kind of thing wasn't even hinted at in this miners' strike. Didn't that represent a difference?

Jimmy I'd like to turn the question round to you. Having recognised that, what do we do about it? That's the question we should be asking ourselves. I've heard about new realism, I've heard about how we should be revamping our structure, but one of our basic principles is being weakened – if somebody is on strike you don't do their work. Before the TUC gets itself

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mbroiled in new approaches, it's got to re-establish its own alues first.

lodney There is a danger in my mind about re-establishing the ld values, because it implies the old values were once properly stablished, that there was a golden age of total trade union olidarity.

immy But the point I'm making is that it has got worse. When ast year the TUC General Council debated whether we should nclude in a statement that you shouldn't cross a picket line, that's sign we're going backwards in relation to some of these rguments. In 1974, the TUC didn't even need to say that.

think this is a key point. It's a cliché to say that Thatcher has shifted he terms of the debate, but she has. Jimmy has given us a prime xample of it.

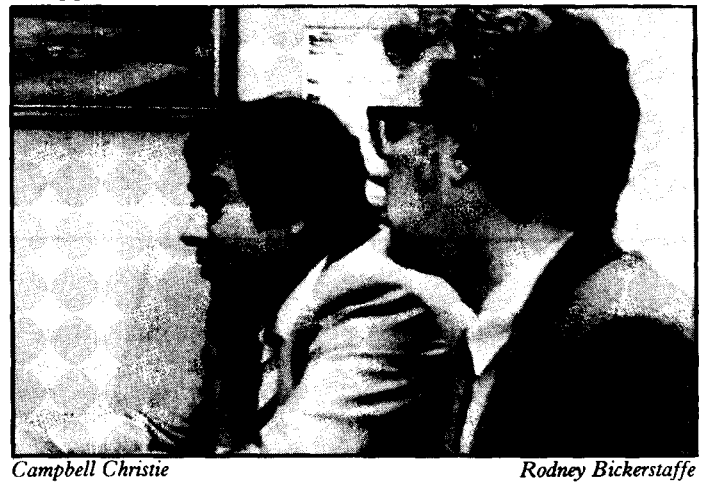
Campbell But it's important to recognise that solidarity action s the most difficult form of action to deliver. When you call on eople to take action in support of someone else's fight, it requires great deal of maturity and understanding from members before ou can get support. That's why I agree with Jimmy when he says hat we need to be looking at ensuring that members understand hese values. It's also important to say, with Rodney, that many of hese values have never been tested in the way they've been tested ecently, because until now there has been a political consensus, ertainly in my period of involvement since the last war, that trade nionism and trade union action was acceptable. Now the issue is olitically charged in a quite new way. Plus the fact of the egislation – to picket in an effective way is against the law, to take ction in solidarity is against the law. So all of these factors come ogether, and make it very difficult to deliver the solidarity action hat we're talking about.

Over the past five years, the trade union movement has slowly, almost mperceptibly, come to accommodate, not accept but accommodate, the egislation the Government has been accumulating on the trade union ront since the 1980 Prior Act. Initially, of course, there were the Wembley decisions saying no accommodation, no compromise with hese kinds of laws. Since then two trade unions have applied for overnment money. One of them has received it for postal ballots. But sn't there a general drift? Don't they just represent the tip of the iceberg, f I could put it that way, in a new accommodation with the reality of nti-trade union legislation that has been passed since 1980? The hard ttitudes that have been expressed in the past are going to have to be wallowed.

Campbell The key thing to remember is that the employment egislation is designed to make it as difficult as possible for the nions to be organised, to be effective, to recruit and maintain nembership. It's important that we have that right in front of us vhen we think about compromises with the legislation. Now, vhen the Wembley decisions were made, they were made in the ontext of that knowledge, and therefore there was to be no o-operation with the legislation. But as time has passed, we've ad to recognise the importance of the survival of the trade union novement. We can't all have our funds sequestrated. There's had o be some decisions taken to avoid the penal consequences of the egislation. Now I don't think that is daft. It's a sensible thing to lo. But it's a different thing if you make voluntary decisions to mbrace particular parts of the legislation because they fit in with our political philosophy. Then you are on the path to allowing this Government to destroy effective trade unionism in Britain.

Rodney We must go beyond the immediate accommodation of particular parts of the current legislation. Accommodation has started not just in terms of the current legislation, but in terms of future legislation and the concept we held in 1970-71 that we should keep the law out of industrial relations. That's not necessarily down to the Government's approach to the 1980-84 Acts, though it's certainly played a part. People used to say no law in industrial relations, apart from minimal health and safety and the like. Now we're saying there are basic rights that ought to be legally enshrined. It's this old debate about whether or not we accept that unions are, in the Government's view, above the law. Because they are immune from aspects of the law, the Government have been able to run with this one. You know, 'there's a law for everyone but the unions which are above the law. They're immune from it. Nobody should be above the law.' People in the short term have accepted that sort of glib statement. It has moved people. People are now saying, 'well, what about positive rights at work. Is that something we want?'

Jimmy I don't think what's happening now is the tip of an iceberg. I believe there's still a majority view in the movement that we oppose the spirit and intent of the 1980 and 1982 Acts. I'll leave



Campbell Christie *Rodney Bickerstaffe*

the other one to the side deliberately, because that's where Campbell's point comes in about the movement's survival. I don't think there's any room for compromise with the 1980 and 1982 Acts at all. They cut right into the heart of traditional trade union activity. If we had come to an accommodation with the 1980 and 1982 Acts we wouldn't have supported the miners in the way we tried to. This question of the political fund ballot, we had to co-operate with that part of the Act because we had no right to destroy the Labour Party by default. And it's been the best thing that ever happened to us. It's made us organise, we've mobilised political activists all over the country. The Left has got a job to do now, to maintain that activity, to retain those activists and keep them alive, to keep them going, to find some mechanism to keep that momentum going.

The last point I want to make is that the Left and the Labour Party will have to develop an understandable and logical policy on balloting. Ballots have now been around for many years. And we will have to devise a policy that says 'yes, we agree with ballots'. There's no way the Left can be seen to be against ballots. But based in a different law, so it becomes a workers' ballot, with the right to have time off to be a scrutineer, and the employers have got to provide this and that, so it becomes a really democratic instrument. For the future that's the sort of debate

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e've got to open up.

odney You say that this is what you think, and that will have to e debated. The point is that at the current point in time, various nions, for various reasons, have got their own particular ositions.

mmy I've got no quarrel with that. The point I was making as that if we're going to win power, then we have to develop an titude to these questions that's credible to our own members and edible to the public, so they're going to say 'yes, we'll vote for at'.

ampbell We mustn't let the Tories or the Right hijack the ncept of democracy. The interesting thing is that the form of emocracy that they're prepared to pay money for is the form of alloting that is most damaging to the collective concept of trade nionism – individual balloting in the home rather than the sort of orkplace organisation that you're talking about. And that's why e can't compromise with the legislation, and say we'll have that it of it. But I agree with you very much, in the whole context of ie trade union movement's future, that we need to ensure that ie campaigning that was achieved as a result of the political fund allot, the involvement of the members that balloting conjures up i people's minds, isn't lost, but is retained and developed.

odney As with the political fund ballot, it does give us a hallenge. The challenge has been there all the time but perhaps me of us have ignored it. The attitude tends to be that if you get ose decisions at national conferences that fit in with the general ft position, then everything's OK.

ampbell I don't agree with that.

odney Let's put it another way. If those in power have felt that ecause the general line of the movement was being re-echoed rough their democratic systems, whatever they held them to be, at that was enough to mean there was contact and communica- on with the members, then they were wrong. I don't care if it's e Right or the Left because we are a participative union. erhaps in the past it hasn't been highlighted as a challenge as uch as it has been over the last five or six years. Certainly the olitical fund is a damn good example. People have had to say, where are the members? What are their aims? Have they got a roper branch structure? Do the stewards regularly see them? Do hey get all the journals that are required? Do they know x, y and ?' You have to check that your car has got its wheels on, its engine n, and is actually capable of moving. And you've got to do that veryday. Because that's what democracy is about.

t's an irony, isn't it, that this vicious Tory legislation has given us this evived desire to maintain our vehicles.

ampbell Many people on the Left have been pushing for this, ng before the Tory legislation. In my own union for instance, hen we consult on strike action, we organise over 1,200 orkplace meetings. Perhaps being a white collar union, it's lightly different. We knew that without that form of organisation here was no point in talking about strike action because you eren't going to deliver anything. This approach was the only way ou could ever possibly deliver your members in action. This esson is well understood – what we have to do now is develop hese experiences into organisational change brought about through democratic debate.

Jimmy My mind has been working on the politics of the thing. What's the first thing that's thrown at Neil Kinnock at press conferences? 'Do you think the ballot's OK?' What's the first thing that Tory leaders say? So it's a political point and we need to have a policy.

Rodney We ought to understand too that they are using that concept. Ballots are not something near and dear to their hearts, they're only interested in it when it suits them. As far as the Government's concerned, if the right answer is given then it doesn't matter whether or not there's been a ballot.

If the vote goes wrong then Tom King gets up and says, 'hang on Jimmy, you didn't ask the right question because you got the wrong answer'. There is, as a result of the trade union legislation, a possibility – it's on the agenda, not the literal agenda, but the political agenda – that two unions may be expelled from the TUC because of their complicity with the Government's trade union legislation. Then there is the spread of no-strike and single-union deals. These pose a big threat to the unity of the trade union movement, don't they?

Rodney This idea of the trade union structure breaking down, with the creation of a new centre, or even new centres, isn't new. The current 'crisis' with the AUEW and the EEPTU is something that is causing concern to us, and certainly when you link it up to all you hear about Mainstream and the Nottinghamshire miners, then the possibility of a new structure emerging is as great as it has ever been. Personally I don't think the AUEW are into that. They've made it absolutely clear at the TUC General Council that they are not involved in any talks about setting up an alternative body.

Nonetheless there are people who are keen to kick them out.

Rodney I think that's being a bit strong. Certainly it will be painted up that way by both ends if you like, for their own distinctive reasons. But I get the general feeling that nobody wants to kick them out. What we want to do is ensure that the discipline, such as it is, of the Trades Union Congress and the labour movement is kept. And it's no great fun for us to find out that 1¼ million people are outwith the TUC, because that's an obvious gift to the media, to the Government, to our enemies in the trade union movement, as well as taking money away from the centre, as well as giving a possible catalyst for another centre to develop. So far as the AUEW is concerned, I don't think we're going to have that problem. So far as the EEPTU is concerned, I'm not so sure, because they are very strident, almost pushing out their jaw and saying 'have a go'.

Do you see TUC unity as the most important thing on the agenda?

Rodney You can't separate too much your original two points. If no-strike deals and single-union agreements blossom as a technique either for the EEPTU or for a bunch of organisations on that political wing, then obviously the facade of trade union unity will have been wrecked in any event. For example, why shouldn't what's happening in print not also happen in a hospital – where either the EEPTU or another organisation goes to the management and says 'Look we will give you a no-strike deal. We've already talked with the government ministers concerned with the NHS, about wanting to look after patients, and we'll never ever

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leave them etc. You give us sole union rights in this hospital or in this health authority, and get rid of all the others.' In principle that could happen almost anywhere because as I understand it what's being said is that they'll look after all grades, anybody at all. So I cannot and will not accept that at all costs we must keep together this 9½ million strong organisation if there are a bunch of organisations within it which are knocking down the structure itself.

Jimmy I agree with that. I'm not in favour of unity at any price. Certainly not on this issue, because the questions it poses are far too important. If what I believe is developing gets off the ground, it could be a threat to the Labour Party. The AUEW and ballot money is irrelevant as an issue in comparative terms to what Rodney has just been talking about. I don't think the AUEW are in the same game as some other people on the extreme right of the movement. I believe that there is a real attempt to upset all the disciplines we've lived by over many years, the disciplines that have kept us going as an organisation. It's not the Left that's trying to do that. We're portrayed that way in the press – the Left wants to bring down the EEPTU. But it's not the Left that's posing a threat. It's coming from the other side. The only people that gain from that are the employers and the Government. Unions are going to have to be careful that they don't fall into the trap, they don't jump into bed with certain people just because it happens to be convenient to do so in the short term. We've all got to be honest with each other in relation to our dealings *vis-à-vis* negotiating and membership agreements. We've got to work out understandings in an honest way, based on the disciplines we've used over the years. If we don't, and if we allow it to go unchecked, we could be in difficulty.

Rodney It's almost the same immorality of the scab – takin another person's job at a lower rate of pay. That's how I see it What such organisations are saying is 'we will be less militant, w will be more accommodating, we will crawl lower and further, you will give us membership'. In the same way as a scab says 'I wi accept ever lower wages, if you give me the job.' It is the denial c collectivism, it is the denial of the basic trade union concept of, s far as is possible, fair dealing. Organisationally it would be a absolute disaster. Because at what point do you draw a line? D you say only on green field sites? Or is it places where there's goin to be reorganisation, or is it where you've got an old factory and new employer? Does it happen where industries become priva tised? Is that the point at which an organisation crawls along an says 'give me members and I'll give you what you want'?

Campbell I see it very simply as just another form of compan unionism. We all condemn sweetheart union deals betwee employers and non-established unions. Basically what's happen ing in this area is that some unions are saying 'we will offer a trad unionism that's not real trade unionism.' And it's very sinister when you see the link up between consultancy groups, union busting groups, breakaway organisations from the railways, fron the NHS, from teaching and from mining. Basically all thes groups have similar characteristics. They are rightwing, com pliant company unions designed to weaken the established unio movement. Any TUC union which links with them and give them credibility and leadership deserves the condemnation of th movement.

Jimmy They're being very well advised and very well financed that's the sinister aspect of it.

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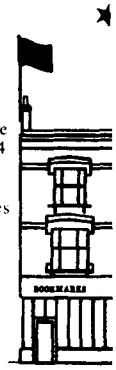

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The sexual revolution of the 1960s embraced the idea of a free sexuality for women and men. But, by the late 60s feminists were beginning to question this claim.

SEX and MORALS Rearming the Left

Lucy Bland

REPRODUCTIVE technologies, 'video nasties', the dangers of the pill, the spread of AIDS . . . just a few examples of developments involving pressing moral questions and demanding a response. While the Right is quick to leap in with absolutist 'explanations' and 'solutions', the Left seems stunned into silence.

The silence of the Left must obviously have a lot to do with its lack of a coherent sexual morality. With the Right making all the running on this front, it is clearly about time for us to consider how to address these issues. But before any such alternative morality can be envisaged, let alone forged, it is essential to try and understand why the Left has no sexual morality that it can call its own in the first place. We also need to consider why the moral Right has an appeal and what problems it addresses? Undoubtedly the moral Right is speaking on emotional issues of sexuality and reproduction that touch deep chords of ambivalence, anxiety and fear in many people. First, though, we should be clear what the terms 'Left' and 'Right' refer to in this discussion, and whether they are appropriate terms to use at all.

Left and Right

The problem with using the terms 'Left' and 'Right' in this context relate to their traditionally being used to refer to political positions held on *public* affairs. Issues of sexual morality, however, cross the boundaries of public and private. When in the late 60s the Women's Liberation Movement coined the slogan 'the personal is political', the moral Right was hard on its heels also to claim so-called private and personal issues of wider social and national relevance. While feminism discussed the political dimension of sexuality and sexual morality, so too did the moral Right – though in terms far removed from women's liberation. In effect both feminism and the moral Right have challenged the narrow and inadequate definition of politics. However, not having come up with adequate alternatives to the concepts 'Left' and 'Right', it seems easier to stick with the terms when discussing sexual morality, while recognising all their ambiguities and difficulties. Moreover, there is a special difficulty with lumping feminism under the general category of the Left. While feminism is clearly part of a wider progressive politics, individual feminists will differ as to whether they consider themselves inside or outside the Left. It is clear, however, that for the Left to renew itself, to have any long term future and to appeal to women, it needs to take on board not simply issues of sexual morality but the challenge of feminism.

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If there are difficulties with the term the Left, are there similar difficulties with the term moral Right? Although the moral Right's adherents are likely to be Conservative supporters, this cannot be assumed. The British moral lobby is politically non-aligned and thus cannot unproblematically be defined as part of the new Right, let alone of Thatcherism. That being said, the moral Right's call for restoration of traditional morality, discipline and order coalesces neatly with Thatcher's call for a return to 'Victorian values'. The moral right has an absolutist morality in relation to 'correct' (and 'natural') sexual and familial life. As in the United States, the moral Right claims to speak for a silent, family-loving majority. There ideal family consists of a white heterosexual couple with breadwinner husband, financially dependent wife and their biological 'naturally produced' offspring. What they would be loath to recognise is that this 'ideal' represents less than 5% of all British households.

Undeterred by any such statistical niceties, the moral Right hold up their ideal family in polar opposition to the notion of permissiveness. To the moral Right permissiveness, at the heart of the 60s 'sexual revolution', spells sexual promiscuity, precocious sex, non-reproductive sex, sexual explicitness . . . in short everything that their ideal family is not and which allegedly threatens its very existence and thereby stability and the order of society as a whole. To the moral Right the inevitable by-products of permissiveness include not only extensive sex education, birth control and abortion, but also venereal diseases, pornography and spiralling sexual violence. They believe that it is these so-called sexual diseases which above all represent retribution (of God or Nature) for sexual immorality. Further, permissiveness is viewed not simply as the genesis of sexual disease but of a whole assortment of contemporary social problems. To Rhodes Boyson, for example: 'A generation of muggers, football hooligans, drugtakers and couldn't-care-less individuals are the dragon-teeth sown by the permissive age of

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the 60s and early 70s.'[1]

Sexual revolution and the Left

Rather than simply dismiss as ludicrous this scapegoating of 'permissiveness', it is important to take on the whole idea of the 60s 'sexual revolution' and its effects, not simply because of its current purchase on people's imagination as the symbol of chaos and crisis, but also because it represents a heritage with which we need to come to terms. Although the Left has no one coherent sexual morality, it could be argued that within the Left there exist strands of two contrasting moralities: on the one hand a traditional labour movement morality with its unquestioned familial ideology, its blindness to power imbalances between the sexes; and on the other hand, a libertarian 'new Left' rooted in the 1960s. To call the latter a 'morality' may seem a misnomer, given that it once celebrated its very *immorality*. Nevertheless, it was in effect just as much a code of ethics about what was right and wrong sexually as the absolutist Christian ethics against which it rebelled. It was 'right' to express your 'natural' sexuality, 'wrong' to repress it. Twenty years ago the new Left was happy to embrace this idea of sexual freedom as unproblemetically progressive. Today it is more cautious, given feminism's stringent critique. The 'sexual liberation' of the 60s was originally claimed to be as liberating for women as for men,

> feminists have opened discussion on subjects previously seen as taboo to the traditional labour movement

what with the advent of the contraceptive pill, and of sexualised fashion such as the mini-skirt. But by the late 60s feminists were pointing to the fallacy of this claim. True, women gained in being 'permitted' to be sexually active and not eternally passive, but it was male sexuality that was chiefly catered for, with women's bodies – yet again– as the sign of the sexual.

Both strands of Left morality have been under fire from feminism. In questioning not simply dominant gender roles but also the current definitions of sexual pleasure and morality, feminists have opened discussion on subjects previously seen as taboo to the traditional labour movement. Unfortunately we cannot yet say that the male Left has significantly shifted in its

> marriage thereby became much more like a private contract outside the law's domain

sexual politics. Nowhere is this truer than in relation to sexual morality.

Permissiveness and Wolfenden

To understand the appeal of the moral Right – an appeal probably greater than the Left would like to admit though smaller than that claimed by the Right – it's necessary to explore what is meant by permissiveness in a little more detail. The term 'permissiveness' has generally been used to refer to two different but related developments of the 1960s. On the one had it has been used to describe a broad set of changes in sexual mores and beliefs – greater sexual activity among young people, supposedly greater tolerance of sexual variety, ideas of sexual liberation culled from Reich and Marcuse. Sex was said to be a 'natural' force that 'needed' release not repression. A society's 'liberation', it was argued, could be measured by its degree of *sexual* liberation. On the other hand the term 'permissiveness' has also been applied to a body of reforming legislation. This legislation included three Acts of 1967 which related to the decriminalisation of male homosexuality in private, the greater availability of abortion, and the provision of contraception on the NHS. The permissive legislation also included the 1969 Divorce Act, which introduced 'divorce by consent' and largely abandoned the notion of 'matrimonial offence'. Marriage thereby became much more like a private contract outside the law's domain.

Much of this legislation was informed by what has become known as the Wolfenden strategy – the liberal strategy that was explicitly spelt out in the 1957 Wolfenden Report of the Select Committee on Prostitution and Homosexual Offences. The Wolfenden Report argued that morality, immorality and sin should be separated from law, crime and illegality. The duty of the law was to regulate public order and maintain acceptable standards of public decency and *not* to patrol personal private life. In the words of the report: 'There must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is not the law's business'. Thus, for example, male homosexuality, until 1967 a criminal offence in public or private, was narrowly decriminalised, outside the reaches of the law, and therefore legal, only if in 'private between two consenting adults over 21.

Note the limited nature of this reform - true of all this so-called permissive legislation. For example, the Abortion Act did not introduce a 'womans right to choose' Control over abortion was partially passed from criminal law to the medical profession. The 'special clause', in the Act now 'permitted' doctors to take into account, in addition to the traditional criteria, the question of the pregnant woman's mental health and her 'actual and reasonably foreseeable environment'. This discretion given to doctors has meant uneven access to abortion across the country: in some regions, doctors' anti-abortion stance has curtailed access to NHS abortions, while in other regions women have been more fortunate. However, through the 'social clause', the law has at least recognised the force of criteria that are personal and social rather than strictly legal or medical.

These 'permissive' Acts, through opening up ambiguous spaces for issues of consent and private choice, contributed to the emergence of more radical movements, such as feminism and the gay movement. But the legislation, along with the sexual liberationist ideas of the period, also encouraged, even engineered, certain problems. I take these problems to include: firstly, the medical profession's prominent role in ethical decision-making; secondly, the false split between public and private; thirdly, the increasing commercialisation of sex. Before examining these in more detail, I'd like to suggest that the moral Right's appeal in part relates to its clear concern to address these various problems. Unlike the Left, feminism also addresses these issues. It is clearly impossible to compare the appeal of the moral Right and of feminism at some general level. *If* one was able to claim that the moral Right's appeal was the greater – (a claim I'm uneasy to make since I believe that many feminist ideas have had and do have an immeasurable influence) – I would relate this to feminism's inevitable challenge. Feminism challenges the status quo of gender inequality and thereby throws up uncertainties for the future. However the moral Right, in opposition to some unknown, untested alternative, offers the suppose security and certainty of traditional gender relations and family forms.

Medical Ethics

The medical profession is daily involved in making covert ethical decisions – 'covert' because they are voiced in terms of scientific objectivity. The general public is

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largely unaware that the majority of decisions made by doctors are moral not technical eg, before the Arthur case of 1981 in which a leading paediatrican was charged with murder, most people didn't realise that doctors regularly make life and death decisions regarding babies with Down's Syndrome. The Warnock Committee, of course, did centrally address the question of medical ethics, but the confused response to the Report from nearly all political quarters is indicative of the lack of information and discussion not only of reproductive technologies but also of the more general issue of medical moralism. The moral Right has jumped in and capitalised on people's very legitimate fear of the medical profession's power. The Gillick case, for example, is not simply about asserting parental control, but also represents a direct challenge to the medical profession's moral decision-making power.

the number of sex counsellors and therapists has spiralled

How has the 60s permissiveness encouraged doctors' ethical decision-making? For a start, the 60s legislation has led to greater powers of discretion being placed in doctors' hands. The Abortion Act, has already been mentioned, while in relation to male homosexuality, the Wolfenden report keenly recommended medical treatment for the homosexual 'offender'. With the 1969 Family Planning Act birth control was also placed more firmly under the control of the medical profession. Ideas of 'sexual liberation' have also boosted medical power. Since the 60s the number of medical sex counsellors and therapists has spiralled. While undeniably helpful in many cases, this is also a clear indication not only of increased expectation, but also of people's increased anxiety as to their sexual performance – an anxiety fed by the heritage of the 60s emphasis on sex as our 'true' fulfilment.

If the moral Right is now questioning the power of the medical profession, it is certainly not the case that feminism has been negligent on this count. Since the 1860s, and the beginning of the last wave of feminism, feminists have consistently challenged medical paternalism and questioned doctors' rights to pronounce on women's health and sexuality. However, feminists have not alway been fully attentive to the implications of contraception and abortion – both healthwise and in terms of the politics of their selective provision. In the last few years, women of colour have alerted white feminists to the eugenic and racist prejudices informing certain doctors' readiness to grant or withhold abortion or to introduce the dangerous injected contraceptive Depo-provera. Some doctors are known to give abortions to women they consider 'unfit' mothers only on the condition that the women agree to their concurrent sterilisation. The feminist campaign against Depo-provera has exposed the practice of giving the drug to certain working class and black women in this country often without their prior knowledge of the dangerous side-effects, and sometimes without their consent.

These realisations have prompted many feminists to rephrase their previous demand for the right to free contraception and abortion and call instead for reproductive rights. The Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign defines this as: 'The right to decide if and when to have children, and the right to comprehensive NHS facilities to back up our decisions, whatever they are'. The right to contraception that is effective *and* safe is one example of a reproductive right still as yet unavailable. The recent revelations of the far-reaching dangers of the contraceptive pill obviously necessitates our questioning its preference over other birth control methods. The pill stands as *the* symbol of 60s permissiveness; its shortcomings have been gleefully pounced on by the moral Right as yet another example of the 'wages of sin'. Rather than retreat into defensiveness we have to recast the issue in terms of a stringent critique of the unscrupulous eagerness of the drug industry to foist under-tested drugs on to the market and of the medical profession to prescribe them.

Commercialisation of sex

Capitalism has been quick to exploit the potential commercial prospects of sexual liberationist ideas. If sex is deemed 'natural' and 'good' for all and sundry, its ever increasing availability and variability is claimed as a desirable development. With the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement, such commercialisation, whether in the form of adverts, pornography or 'page 3' pin-ups, was loudly condemned.

However, one area of disagreement has arisen in relation to the significance of sex 'consumed' or 'performed' privately. The liberal approach to sexual morality holds

[1] 'The Price of the Permissive Age' Talk to Rotary Club of London *Daily Express* (2.8.85).

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girls should be encouraged into a sense of sexual autonomy that enables them to stand up to sexual pressures from boys

that consensual sexual practices in private (however that may be defined) – including the reading of pornography and the viewing of sex and violence videos – have little bearing on subsequent sexual behaviour and beliefs. In contrast, the moral Right and many feminists challenge this public/private distinction. They would both argue that men's use of pornography in private as well as in public has wider repercussions through contributing to a misogynist climate in which women's portrayal is oppressive and restrictive. But the moral Right, while disturbed by pornography's undermining of male respect for women, is probably more concerned with its supposed undermining of the 'family'. Many on the Left would probably reject the liberal approach and agree with feminism and the moral Right that so-called 'private life', ranging from childrearing in the family through to one's sexual practices, have significant effects on society as a whole. The disagreement with the moral Right is more likely to lie with the kind of society desired. The moral Right, for example, are obsessed with the presence of an authoritative father figure. The patriarchal family fits their vision of a disciplined society in which men are 'real' men, women 'real' women and everyone knows their place. This is of course anathema to feminists. But where does the Left stand on such issues? It could be argued that the unquestioned conservative familial ideology held by many in the labour movement is not a hundred miles away from that of the Right.

An alternative sexual morality?

I've pointed to common ground between the moral Right and feminism: hostility to pornography and sexual exploitation, concern with the sexual dangers and pressures experienced by girls and women, concern with the medical profession's power etc. In many ways of course the moral Right's ideals are the polar opposite to feminism: their view of women's proper role (namely mother and submissive wife) and of 'natural' and 'normal' sex (heterosexual with an abhorrence of homosexuality) are clear examples. However, awareness of the parallel concerns is a crucial first step in the process of understanding the particular appeal of the moral Right – its tapping of genuine anxieties and discomforts. With this awareness we can, hopefully, move on to offer alternative understandings.

One of the problems of defining a morality has been its traditional yoking to religion. Nineteenth-century freethinkers, for example, tried, but failed, to wrest morality away from this colonisation; their atheism entailed their being defined not simply as immoral but as sexually immoral. The moral Right thereby claimed concept of morality as its own; it has likewise claimed the term 'responsible'. But *who* is enabled to be responsible? Certainly not young people, if the moral Right has its way. It wishes to curtail sex education in the belief that such knowledge is provocative and dangerous. We need to argue that on the contrary it is only through having access to such information that young people can ever hope to make responsible choices – responsible to themselves, and others that is, rather than to the nebulous notions of nation and family deployed by the Right.

An alternative sexual morality necessitates a radically different kind of sex education – one that extends beyond the current confines of reproduction and marriage and places moral and political issues centrally on the agenda. While stressing that sex should only be acceptable if pleasurable, knowledge of its dangers and of the dangers of contraception should also be clearly indicated so that young people are enabled to make *informed* sexual choices. Girls should be encouraged into a sense of sexual autonomy that enables them to stand up to sexual pressures from boys. Unfortunately it is the moral Right which has been quickest to pick up both on the dangers of the pill and the reality of many girls being pressurised into sex – again part of the appeal of Victoria Gillick's campaign.

Before any sense of an alternative can be developed, we need to initiate wide ranging debate on various problems out lined here. Thus, for example, the socialis demand for collective health care needs t include discussion of medical accountabil ity, adequate information and informe consent in all medical matters, and wide debate of the processes of medical ethics Public discussion of reproductive tech nologies has barely begun but already th moral Right is closing off debate througl its appeal to moral absolutes. It is crucia for feminists and the Left to discuss al aspects of the issue, especially its mora implications.

Feminist demands must lie at the hear of an alternative sexual morality. In par ticular the demand for women's reproduc tive rights and for control over our owi sexuality must be addressed. However there is current disagreement amongs feminists as to what the latter should anc might entail. If feminists have difficulties in reaching agreement, will it not be harde still for feminists and the Left to unite? I cannot be assumed that there is any *neces sary* convergence of interests. Many femin ists are unlikely to feel inclined to ally with the male Left until the men have begun tc put their own house in order – that is, have started to discuss their own sexuality sexual behaviour and its effects, rather than leaving the field of sexual morality tc feminists or the moral Right.

Unlike the moral Right we are not in the business of offering absolutes. Rather, we should be raising thorny issues and empowering people to make informed and responsible choices – perhaps a rather naive sounding plea given the present closing down of people's options and rights. The danger is, that without a vision of possible alternatives that are fully debated rather than left hanging in mid-air, increasing numbers may be drawn to the false securities of the reactionary ethnics of the moral Right.

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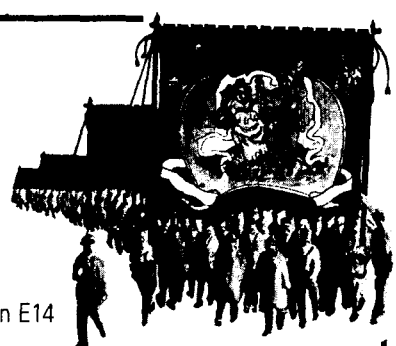

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Live Aid was a remarkable international institution by the relatively rich of the North for the desperately poor of the South.

WHY AID CAME ALIVE

David Edgar

THE LIVE AID CONCERT gave a number of fabulously rich people the opportunity (at the cost of a few hours of their time) to parade their compassion in front of one of the largest television audiences in history. Among them were a number of performers known for their highly dubious opinions – including both the stars whose reactionary remarks led to the formation of Rock against Racism. Top of the the American bill was a former protester now turned born-again Christian, and the British line-up was headed by a former Beatle last in the news for tearing up a striking teacher's leaflet. The organiser of the event – whose stage act used to include the projection of pornographic films – owns properties in Chelsea and Kent, and has been nominated for a prize founded by an arms manufacturer and given in the past to Henry Kissinger and Menachen Begin. Not surprisingly, the event was almost totally lacking in any political content, and indeed began with the showing of a specially recorded video in which two multi-millionaires announced that 'the time is right for dancing in the streets' (try telling *that* to the starving of Ethiopia, or for that matter the five million unemployed!). And the jamboree ended (in Britain) with the communal singing of the ethnocentric 'Do they know it's Christmas' and (in America) with the presumptuous 'We are the World'.

> Live Aid gashed a great gaping hole in the contemporary conservative portrait of the modern malaise

Much of the above is true. So why didn't it feel like that? Why did it feel that despite the tarnished reputations of Bowie, Clapton, McCartney, Dylan *et al*, for once they were on the right side? Why indeed, amid all that undoubtedly blatent commercialism, and indubitably mawkish sentimentality, was it impossible to prevent the odd tear creeping into the corner of at least one eye?

Clear rules and bad examples

Before answering that question it's useful, I think, to pose another, which is why the reaction *of the Right* to Live Aid was so embarrassed and half-hearted. And the answer to *that*, I think, is that by its very existence, let alone its triumphant success, Live Aid gashed a great gaping hole in the contemporary Conservative portrait of the modern malaise.

Since the riots of 1981, the Conservative leadership has regarded the state of the nation's youth as a matter of particular concern. Initially, this took the form of cabinet committees solemnly considering how children could be taught to manage their pocket money; then Mrs Thatcher and her ministers began to complain (in the context of the riot, and with increasing frequency) that children were no longer given the clear rules they need and indeed want, and without which they cannot learn the ancient and necessary virtues of discipline and self-restraint. Increasingly, such notions were associated with the baleful effects of the welfare state – which was supposed to foster in the young (along with the insidious propaganda of left-wing teachers and social workers) the idea that their every appetite was an entitlement, and that they bore no personal responsibility for the amelioration of their condition.

Further, the argument ran, the decline of religious, social and familial sanctions – and the promotion of 'morally relative' and 'permissive' ideas in the educational and communications media – led to a situation in which any denial of gratification was viewed as a legitimate excuse for violence. And finally, this condition was blamed on (and also, by a subtle sleight of hand, extended to) those adult groupings who were held at one and the same time to be setting children a bad example (Sir Keith Joseph's constant refrain to the teachers) and to be themselves in the position of greedy children, unable to restrain their clamorous demands on the paternal state. As Mrs Thatcher remarked in April, of humanity in general and the British populace in particular, 'you don't get the best out of them, unless you are really rather firm'.[1]

Heysel Stadium

This model was reiterated with considerable force – if not positive glee – in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy of the Heysel stadium in Brussels. In the *Spectator*, Richard West wrote that 'the collapse of teaching and discipline in our schools, thanks largely to Shirley Williams, is nowhere more evident than in Liverpool . . . (where) a whole generation of pampered, undisciplined children has grown up with the habit of petulance, envy, greed and wanton cruelty – as seen last week on the television screens of the world'.[2] In the same publication, Auberon Waugh identified the hooligans as 'our

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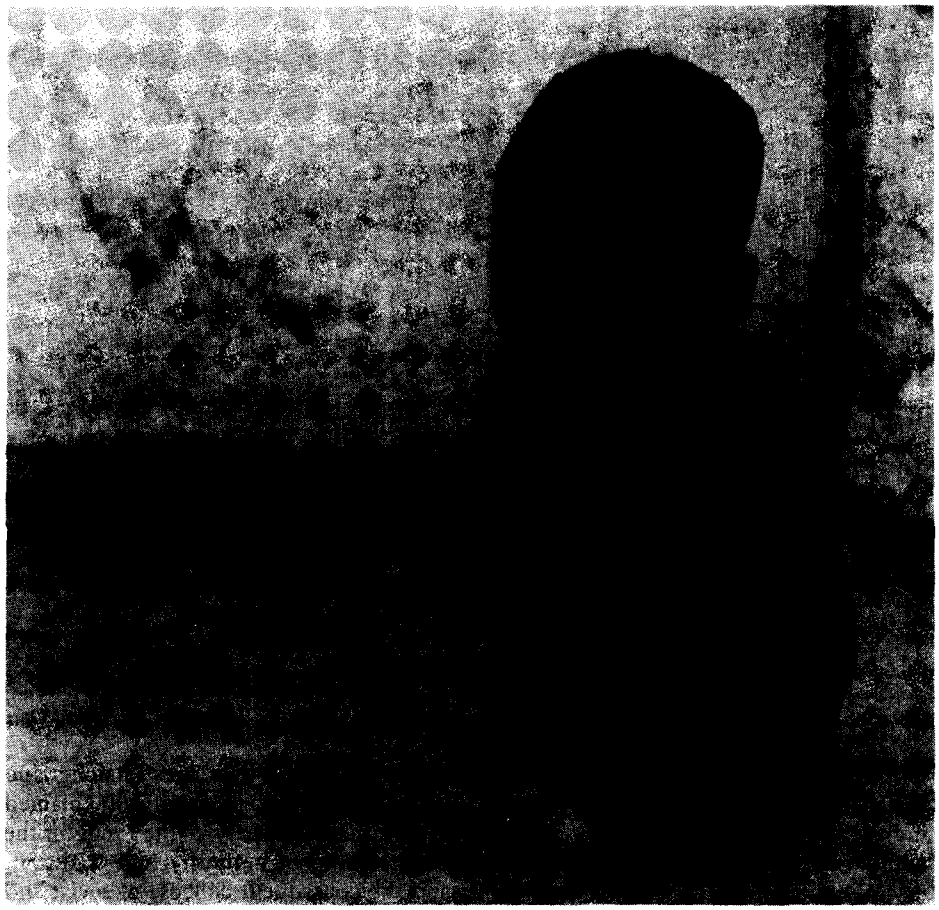

wonderful, overpaid "workers" on a spree'[3], and in the *Sunday Telegraph* demanded that from now on the 'Calibans' be kept 'locked up in their caves'.[4] In the *Guardian*, Mary Whitehouse pointed the finger of blame at 'the soft-centred, self-interested, liberal-humanist sentiment which has beguiled our universities, schools and indeed churches' and which now 'has demanded a terrible price in human delusion and consequent suffering'.[5]

In the *Daily Mail*, Anthony Burgess asked 'what has gone wrong with the lower orders'[6], a question answered by Lynda Lee Potter, who defined the message of the 'gratification society' as follows: 'If you're lazy, go on social security; if you lust after children, rent an obscene video; if you're depressed swallow valium . . . if a fellow worker dares to defy you, chuck a load of concrete at him; if you don't like the look of a rival football supporter, kill him'.[7] For Brian Walden (in the London *Standard*), Heysel showed that if 'the working classes in our cities . . . are not restrained by Christian morality, then they are not restrained at all',[8] while for George Gale (in the *Express*), 'we have positively and enthusiastically endorsed indiscipline' in a period when 'permissiveness has been the motto of the age'.[9]

Wembley and Philadelphia

But it was the *Daily Telegraph* that presented the model in its starkest form. Attesting that 'in matters of public behaviour great improvement occurred between the middle of the last century and the middle of this one', the paper's leader-writers went on to argue that 'the post-1945 settlement embodied a reversal' of this trend: 'it became fashionable among the middle classes to sneer at family, respectability and middle-class values, premarital chastity, social disciplines, neatness and thrift'. As a consequence, 'they should not have been surprised when what the Victorian middle classes called "the lower orders", but to whom they had a sense of responsibility, took those who set intellectual and political fashions in this country at their word . . . They failed to understand that ordinary people need simple rules to live by, and that without a framework of social discipline they can very easily become brutalised'.[10]

Less than two months after that was written, there was another international event, also involving large numbers of young people, assembled in (on this occasion) two sports stadia. Despite Anthony Burgess' dire warnings about the inevitably atavistic nature of mobs, this gathering was completely, one might almost say eponymously peaceful. Indeed, it was engaged in what is (for the Right) the most laudable of purposes – voluntary charitable endeavour. As was pointed out by a left critic of Live Aid (Mark Lewis, in the *Guardian*), the event could well be compared with those Victorian philanthropic activities 'so vigorously encouraged by both Thatcher and Reagan', even if the nineteenth-century do-gooder donated his own wealth, and often chose to do so anonymously.[11] And although Mrs Thatcher's sterner economic gurus might in fact have a bit of trouble with the general concept of overseas aid, even if donated from private sources, surely it was better for 70,000 young persons to be throwing teddy bears at each other rather than beer cans, singing and swaying rather than slinging and slaying?

The new Right and rock 'n' roll

So why in the event was the response so incredibly muted? Why did the columnists and leader-writers not queue up behind *The Times*' Richard Williams to proclaim that 'the Wembley leg of Saturday's extraordinary Live Aid concert felt like the

for the contemporary British Right . . . the 60s served up the poison in a peculiarly concentrated and virulent form

healing of our own nation', proving that, despite Heysel, 'young people could gather peacefully in large numbers, drawn as much by a "good cause" as by the chance to worship the gods of popular entertainment'?[12] Indeed, apart from Williams and (initially) two put-downs in the *Guardian*, there was hardly a murmur in the feature pages at all, and while every serious daily ran a leader on Heysel, only one (the *Daily Telegraph*) commented on Live Aid, which was described as 'wholly

1 London *Standard* 11 April 1985.
2 *Spectator* 8 June 1985.
3 *Ibid.*
4 *Sunday Telegraph* 2 June 1985.
5 *Guardian* 10 June 1985.
6 *Daily Mail* 31 May 1985.
7 *Daily Mail* 5 June 1985.
8 London *Standard* 4 June 1985.
9 *Daily Express* 31 May 1985.
10 *Daily Telegraph* 3 June 1985.
11 *Guardian* 15 July 1985.
12 *Times* 15 July 1985.

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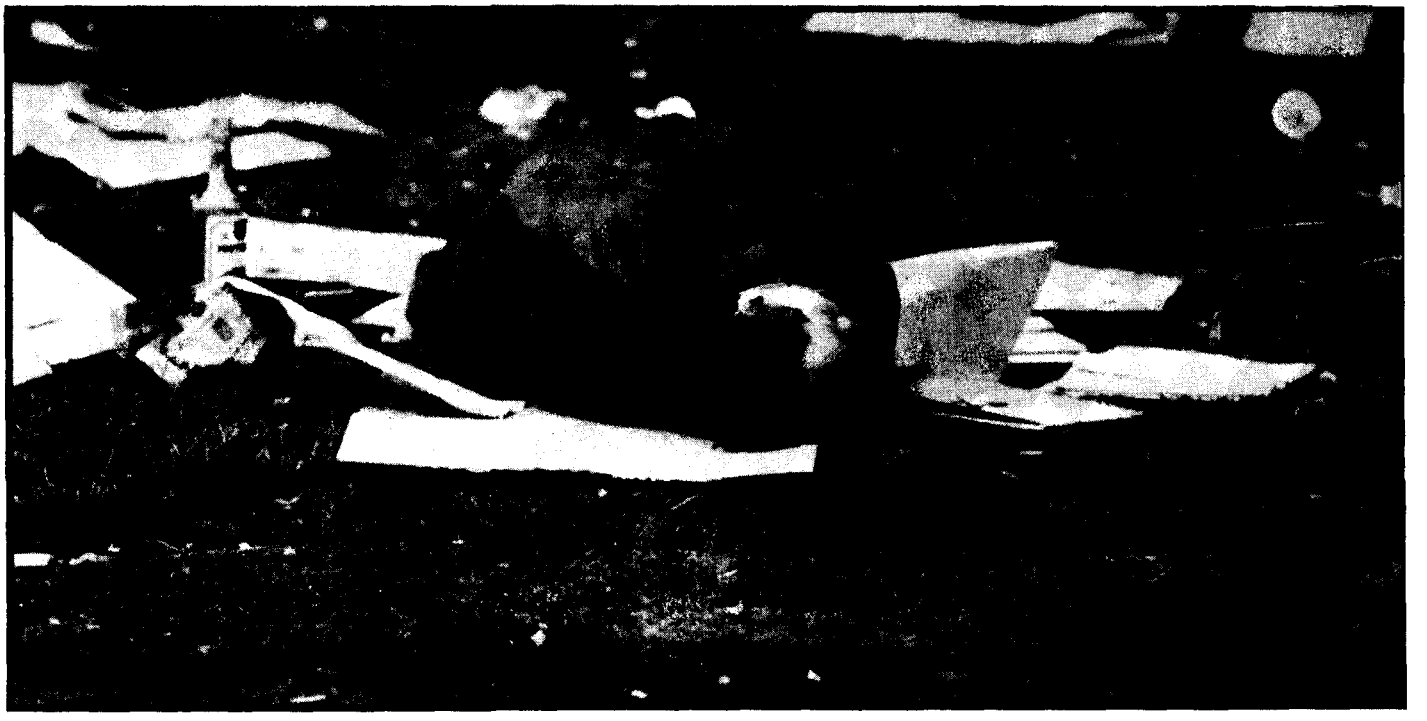

London: Down and Outs

admirable in its intent', but only in contrast with the pop industry's more usual 'venality, greed and corruption'.[13]

The reason for both the reticence and the carping appears at first to be a matter of taste. As the anti-libertarian writer Mary Kenny wrote in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 'it seems churlish indeed to utter objections to the very charitable accomplishment of Bob Geldof', but, churlish or no, it was none the less 'a pity that so much of the rock music sound is so horrible'.[14] Similarly, though in reverse, Auberon Waugh was forced to acknowledge that 'this is not the occasion to sneer at the horrible, boring noises these people made or shudder at their dreadful appearance. If a single African life is saved by all this caterwauling, it is obviously a good thing'.[15] But this objection to Live Aid goes way beyond the merely formal. Anyone reading the social authoritarian Right in the post-riot era will have been struck by the importance of rock music in its demonology.

It's not just that Mary Kenny doesn't *like* rock music; she is clearly highly *concerned* that 'this noisy, tuneless, rather barbaric performance is the culture that enfolds our children'.[16] And in his post-Heysel *Express* piece, George Gale made it pellucidly clear why the new Right is inherently and implacably hostile to sex, drugs *and* rock and roll: adjuring those who think that 'violence is confined to political extremists' to 'listen to the pop "music" that is thrust into the eager ears of our children and grandchildren . . . Minds indeed become mindless when stuffed with the trash poured out by the pop industry every day, without restraint, without control, without decency, without discipline'.[17]

The spectre of the 60s

Such lacunae have been listed in such a context by other commentators too. In 1983, Colin Welch wrote in the *Spectator* of a world from which certain virtues are completely missing, those virtues including 'all fidelity, restraint, thrift, sobriety, taste and discipline',[18] and the world being that evoked, as he saw it, by the work of the Beatles. And like Gale, Welch is sure that it was not just the Beatles, but the era in which they flowered, which was at desperate fault:

> To define the world of the 1960s is to adumbrate the damage it did and is still doing. It was a world in which hallowed connections were severed or weakened: between crime or naughtiness and punishment; between effort, skill, accomplishment and reward. It was a world in which all the laws which make civilisation possible were damned as oppressive . . . From this world were banished as hostile the aged, the past and all the mentors who spoke therefrom.[19]

The fact is that, for the contemporary British Right, while the whole of the postwar era might have been polluted and enervated by the sickly syrup of welfarism, the 60s served up the poison in a peculiarly concentrated and virulent form. In the years since 1981, in speech after speech and article after article, Mrs Thatcher and her supporters have specifically blamed the 'permissive society' of the 1960s for the undermining of authority and tradition, and the consequent collapse of social and individual discipline, in the years that followed.[20] Within the last months, indeed, the chorus has been joined by voices as various as Victoria Gillick ('the Gillick parents see themselves as specifically in rebellion against the 1960s and the changes in society it spawned'[21]) and Norman Tebbit (who blamed 'the end of National Service and the emergence of flower power and the permissive society of the sixties' for promoting social violence[22]).

Geldof's project

And it is this analysis of the root of the national malaise which gives the Right problems with Live Aid's content as well as its form. Not only have commentators like Welch and Gale condemned the music as the transmission belt of anarchy, nothing less than the very virus of the plague; in political terms, too, they confront a potent expression of the 60s in defiant and indeed triumphant flower. For, despite its generational breadth, it was surely obvious that the day belonged to the Jaggers, Bowies and Baezes, not because they're better people than the Spandau Ballets and the Whams, but because for them such unalloyed idealism was a familiar accompaniment of the music. Who can doubt indeed that in its commitment to the power of will and the politics of conscience, Live

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aid was consciously attempting to evoke Woodstock and conjure the Concert for Bangladesh?

And who can doubt either that even as an act of philanthropy Live Aid departed in significant respects from the accepted Victorian model. Non-governmental it may well have been, individual and private certainly wasn't. And despite Mrs Thatcher's last-minute message of congratulation – rushed by motorcycle from Number Ten, and praising Geldof for, guess what, setting a good example to the young – it was clear from their broadcast confrontation over EEC food surpluses that Geldof's project is to shame *governments* into higher aid spending. In that sense, Geldof and his lieutenants were far from being long-haired Nuffields or Bardos in blue jeans. As Hugo Young pointed out in his perceptive *Guardian* piece (a welcome if belated antidote to Terry Coleman and Mark Lewis), Live Aid has given the lie to the notion that overseas aid is at the bottom of the public's priority pile. It has challenged the Government's own aid programme (more accurately, *de*-programme) by demonstrating that 'the crisis which governments take least seriously is the one which, in certain circumstances, the people take most seriously'. In that sense, Live Aid was, for Mrs Thatcher and her supporters, truly 'a message from the prince of darkness'.[23]

rock and roll music – the only popular form with the faintest radical credentials that has ever gained significant purchase in the working class

Learning the lessons

So what should the Left learn from Live Aid? Should it indeed (for there is no more double-edged slogan than 'my enemy's enemy is my friend') learn anything at all?

It seems to me that if there are lessons to be learnt, they are lessons that have been on offer, in one form or another, for the best part of 20 years; ever since, indeed, that period whose continued influence so disturbs our leaders. In other words, despite some tart words on *World in Action*, Live Aid is an event with its roots in the 60s in more ways ever than the Right is aware of, and that was one of its particular virtues.

First of all, Live Aid was a mass *cultural* mobilisation, but one a million miles removed from the clammy, deadening form of that idea traditional on the Left, notably because the culture through which people were being mass-mobilised has genuine mass appeal. Indeed, it reminds us of the immense resource of rock and roll music – the only popular form with the faintest radical credentials that has ever gained significant purchase in the working class. And of course, one of the reasons why a fabulously rich rock musician is *not* the same as an even moderately wealthy property speculator is precisely because throughout its history rock music has consistently returned to its origins as working-class protest music, and whenever it has temporary slipped into being anything else, it's a sure sign that a new burst of oppositional energy – punk in the late 70s, the Beatles in 1963 – is going to come along to drag it, twisting and shouting, back to its roots.

Second, the event was by definition *internationalist*, though once again, not in any traditional sense. Part of its internationalism rested precisely on its shared culture, of course, and, in that, it was directly comparable with the youth uprising in support of the Vietnamese revolution, surely the most significant international left mobilisation since the Spanish Civil War. And like that campaign – and *unlike* Spain – its international context can only be understood through the technology and vocabulary of electronics – the global village not only of the jet aeroplane but also of the communications satellite. Live Aid began with Bob Geldof watching a television programme, and ended up with him making one.

North and South

And third, of course, and most importantly, Live Aid sought culturally to mobilise billions of people, all across the northern hemisphere, on behalf of the tens of billions of the south. By definition, the event was about the relatively rich extending their hands to the absolutely poor, and it demonstrated dramatically the energies

13 *Daily Telegraph* 15 July 1985.
14 *Sunday Telegraph* 21 July 1985.
15 *Spectator* 20 July 1985.
16 *Sunday Telegraph* 21 July 1985.
17 *Daily Express* 31 May 1985.
18 *Spectator* 17 December 1983.
19 *Spectator* 20 October 1984.
20 See my 'Bitter Harvest' *New Socialist* September 1983.
21 *Sunday Telegraph* 7 July 1985.
22 *Daily Mail* 25 July 1985.
23 *Guardian* 18 July 1985.

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that can be unleashed on behalf of others, energies which, Hugo Young argued, could be mobilised to such an extent for no other imaginable cause. This is not to say that Live Aid's cause was soft or bland – indeed, for socialists, it must be welcome to see an idealistic campaign that seeks to confront the arbitrary cruelties of nature with the exercise of collective human organisation and will. Rather, it provided a potent challenge to the strenuous efforts of contemporary Conservatism to create a commonsense rationale for selfishness and individual greed on all fronts.

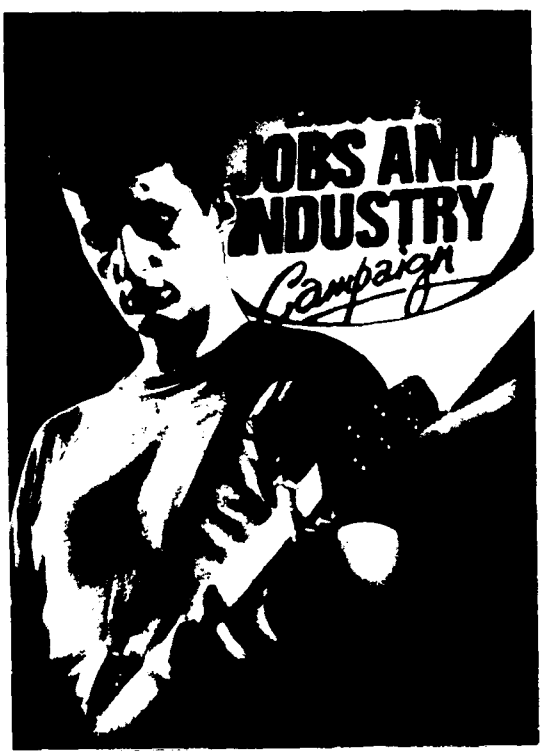
In this sense, perhaps, Hugo Young is being unduly pessimistic about the power of the spirit of Live Aid to infect the domestic as well as the international arena. Clearly, it would have been impossible to mobilise anything like as extensively for the miners. However, if Live Aid has triumphantly demonstrated that (*pace* the traditional right-wing argument) charity need not begin at home, it surely doesn't imply that it can't be reimported. If – contrary to Thatcherite superstition – people can care for strangers, cannot the same well-springs sustain the poor within our gates?

I am aware that much of points one and two, and almost all of point three, are arguments viewed with the deepest suspicion. However, the conventional wisdom that people are best mobilised around their own oppression – or at least on behalf of their own collective self-interest – is by no means fully confirmed by recent history. From getting the Americans out of Vietnam to stopping the South African cricket tour of Britain, from the Anti-Nazi League to Greenham Common, campaigns for others (or on behalf of the species as a whole) have proved remarkably successful, and indeed resilient. And it's perhaps not completely coincidental that it's been those movements – rather than more conventional industrial mobilisations – which have shown the greatest imagination in their use of form, from the poster and badge art of the antiwar movement and the Anti-Nazi League, to the powerful theatrical symbolism of the practice of the new peace campaigners.

> Live Aid began with Bob Geldof watching a television programme, and ended up with him making one

If there has been one theme runnin through all the debates that have occupie the Left since 1983, it has been that th socialist vision of the 1945 governmen once so potent, has now run its course. Th true message of Live Aid for the Left, seems to me, is that there is another perio of rather more recent history, whic undertook experiments in democratic egalitarian and collective political form even more radical than those of the 1940s and whose principles and ideas still inforn the best of what is happening today, fron municipal decentralisation and green poli tics to the continued creativity of femin ism. Shortly after the Woodstock Roc Festival of 1969 – the apogee of 60 idealism, the moment when the politic and the culture finally embraced – a simila event was held in Altamont, California during which at least four people wer brutally killed by Hells Angels, providin by comparison a potent symbol of th flower generation going murderously sour In the wake of the 13th of July, however perhaps it is less fanciful than it was t believe that the 60s found their enduring form at Woodstock rather than Altamont and even the 80s not so much in the Heyse Stadium, as in those of Wembley an Philadelphia.

JOBS AND INDUSTRY



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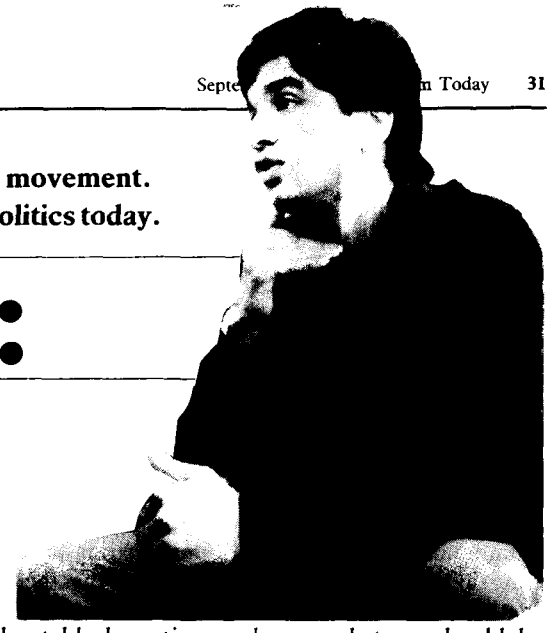
he issue of black sections is important for black people in the labour movement. ut does this tactical demand really reflect what is going on in black politics today.

BLACK SECTIONS:

Radical Demand.....or Distraction?

a roundtable discussion



Unmesh Desai

he participants in the roundtable are: Diane Abbott, Labour ouncillor in the London borough of Westminster and a ember of the National Black Sections Steering Committee of e Labour Party; Unmesh Desai, active in community defence mpaigns in the East End of London; Stuart Hall, author of *olicing The Crisis* and Professor of Sociology at the Open niversity; Vishnu Sharma who has been active in the Indian 'orkers Association in Southall for 28 years, is currently hairperson of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants id on the Executive Committee of the Communist Party; A vanandan, editor of *Race and Class* and active in the black ovement since the 60s. It is chaired by Ansel Wong, Race elations Advisor to the Greater London Council.

'ow do you see the relationship between black sections in the Labour 'arty and the wider black movement?

Jnmesh Desai We cannot see the black struggle, the struggle f black people fighting for basic rights, in the context of any articular party whether it be the Tory Party or the Labour Party. 'hen you talk about black sections, about black people strug-ling in any party, it's part of a wider struggle.

)iane Abbott The point about black sections is that they are not n end in themselves, they're a strategy. They must be seen in the ontext of the emergence of parallel demands for black sections in ie unions, with people in NALGO and elsewhere talking about lack caucuses and organising things with black people. The emand for black sections first came forward in 1983. There were arious Labour parties in London that had black caucases, ncluding my own in Paddington and in summer 1983 we started aying why don't we demand black sections. A number of things onverged. One was the longstanding institutionalised racism 'ithin the Labour Party and the increasingly glaring contradic-on between Labour party reliance on the black vote and the fact iat the structures of the Labour Party are almost all white. Then iere was the way, in the late 70s, that the Left in the Labour 'arty had used constitutional means, like mandatory reselection, s a way of organising against the *status quo*. And there was the mergence in the Labour Party of a different generation of black ctivists, who took for granted that they should organise them-elves as black people.

Jnmesh I want to come back to your original question because I iink the way Diane is approaching it is setting the wrong terms)r the debate for black people. I think it's a sign of the times. We are talking about black sections, whereas what we should be talking about is the emergence of fascism, about racist attacks on our people – that is our central problem. The most immediate problem facing our people is one of sheer survival. It is as simple as that in the inner city ghettoes for the overwhelming majority of black people. If you look at the demand for black sections I see it in a different light from the way Diane has approached it. We've got to look at it in terms of the wider political process, tracing it back to the 1981 uprisings. It was black people struggling in the communities who came out on the streets of Brixton, Toxteth, and fought the state, out of their own concrete experiences. And they have not reaped the benefits of the political fallout from that. Those benefits have gone to a certain section of the black community. I'm not aiming this at any particular organisation or person, but they have gone to a certain group of middle class black people. It is significant that the rise of black sections started in 1983, two years after the uprisings, rather than ten years ago. Diane is quite right to point out the parallels with black caucuses in the trade unions. But the way I look at the struggle for black sections is that it's an internal Labour Party thing, it's not related to the struggle of black people in general. How the blacks organise in the Labour Party, that is up to them, and I say that as a card-carrying Labour Party member. But it's not the way we are going to solve the problems of our people. The way the black sections demands are being formulated, it's certain individuals who only discovered their blackness when they found their route to becoming councillors was restricted.

Diane It goes without saying that everything that's happened in black politics post-81 is affected by the 1981 riots. But the demand for black sections in the Labour Party is not entirely unrelated to the rest of black struggle outside. The problems that black people face in society have always been the same, they've been about the nature of the British state. When you talk about fascism, or the police, or struggle, you're talking about the nature of the British state. So the idea that you can take the struggle for black sections, and extract it, and say that it's quite separate, is a nonsense. You can only make sense of the demand by seeing it in the wider frame of black politics. I'll tell you something else about black sections. I'm the only woman in this discussion and I'm ten years younger than most of us here. Black sections are about a different generation, and it's about leaving behind some of the patriarchy which is associated with an older style of black politics.

Vishnu Sharma We need to take a broader view than what happens in the Labour Party. Our experience, particularly in Southall where I live and have lived since I came here 28 years ago,

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Diane Abbott

is that we unionised ourselves. Being workers, we organised ourselves on a class basis, although many Asians, of course, came from a non-industrial background. Bearing in mind that at that time, in the early 60s, people were saying that there was no racism in this society, it is the most tolerant society, then we were involved in doing a sort of survey about whether racism really existed or not. We realised that for all of us, the colour of our skin, our national origin, meant that there was racism against us, so we formed the Indian Workers Association as a community representative and voice. There was also involvement in politics and political parties. Many people joined the Labour Party, some the Communist Party, and some the Tory Party, a lot more have in fact. So there are the class and community organisations, as well as the political organisations. When it comes to the Labour Party, I want to talk about what I see of the Labour Party in Southall. The first Asian Labour local councillor was elected in 1968 and we now have seven Asian councillors out of a total of 15, all Labour, in Southall, that's the sort of progress we've had in the Labour Party. The difficulty is that they have not put up a good show as councillors, and did not prove to the community that we are worthy of it.

Diane The thing that's always thrown at people in black sections is 'you're just a load of careerists'. I want to knock it on the head. Because black sections have emerged at the same time as the Labour Party has been involved in the reselection of MPs, it's got very tied up with the issue of MPs and reselection. But to me black sections were never about getting more black MPs and councillors, the British state can survive a few token black MPs and councillors. Don't forget that in America there have been black congressmen since the 50s. Black sections are about the right of black people to organise autonomously in the Labour Party. It's about that principle. I organised the black caucus in Paddington where I live not to become a councillor but when I had been selected as a councillor, before I was actually elected, because I could see what had happened to other black people who had become councillors. They'd become isolated from the community, they'd become token and ineffective. I wanted to construct a black constituency within the party that I could relate to.

How do you see black sections, Stuart?

Stuart Hall There isn't just one reason for people to become involved in black sections, there are several. There are certainly careerists around, not least in the Labour Party, and they are black, white, pink and blue. But I don't think that's the only reason. What Diane says is also very important. The point about black sections is whether or not it is advanced as the main or exclusive route for black politics now. If it is, I would see it as an extremely dangerous development because it would contain black politics inside the parliamentary reformist routines of the Labour Party which would be disastrous. Alternatively, you can see it one of several strategies in a variety of forms of black politi Behind that lies a question which perhaps we ought to discuss myself do not see one black politics any longer. There is a range black initiatives, all of them representing the variety of expe ences of exploitation and oppression of black people in society. I'm not at all surprised that out of a variety of black experienc comes a variety of different forms of politics.

What I would say about black sections is, for that section people who feel that it is important to work within the establish political organisations – principally because of the connecti with the old labour movement – the working class, trade unio and so on – then the issue of black sections, the principle autonomous political organisation, is an extremely important or The worst thing for people who are involved in the Labo Party/trade union area is to operate there without autonomo organisation, simply to submerge themselves and the bla experience under the agenda set by the predominantly white ma organised working class. Therefore for those people it is extrem ly important to find some way of organising within tho structures to give articulation, from below, to the experiences exploitation and oppression, and to find ways of transformi those institutions, the institutions of the labour movement, fro below, in the light of the vast majority of black people wl actually vote for the Labour Party. That's one form of politics b it's not by any means the only, and it may not even be the mo important form of politics.

Diane Nobody has ever said that black sections were the on strategy, the only route.

Stuart I know, but you have to respond to the fact that this is tl issue that takes off, the rapid visibility of it, the fact that noboc has been discussing black politics for a long time and sudden black sections in the Labour Party, which is a tiny part of what going on, is the issue.

Diane It astonished us as much as it astonished you. We wei making a little tactical demand, and all of a sudden it took off, tl press coverage, the way the Labour Party was suddenly jumpin up in the air.

Unmesh I agree with Diane about that. I've never heard anyon from the black sections claim that the only way forward is fc black sections. But the point is that it is the issue that is bein debated in the media right now. It's how they see black struggle from outside. During the course of the Newham 7 campaign, leading member of the Black Sections Steering Committee, o whatever it was called at that time, asked me to speak on blac sections at a constituency Labour Party meeting and when outlined some of my reservations to him what he said in reply wa very significant: 'Look', he said, 'We'll push your name inside th Labour Party, you push our black sections in the community'. think this sort of trade-off is very dangerous and the politic behind it stink. Until black sections start relating to the struggle of people against the police, against the state, the anti-deportatio campaigns, the real issues, what is it all about?

Diane I reject the assumption that people involved in blacl sections are the new-born political activists who have no record o struggle, that's just not the case.

Vishnu I'd like to tackle the question of black sections from :

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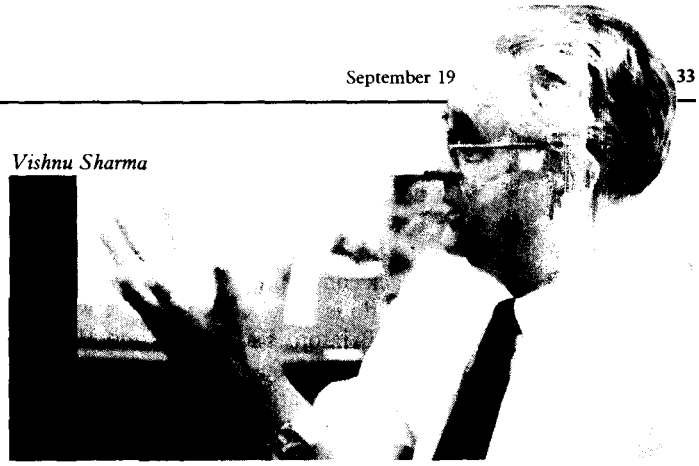
ider point of view. Take CARL (Campaign Against Racist aws), which is a very broad outfit, with white, black and Asian rganisations involved. Now I am in favour of a specifically black ıd Asian point of view on what it should do, how broad it should e. I am for the creation of a black consensus of opinion and :rategy within an organisation and pushing that organisation in a ertain direction, to fight against certain issues. In the JCWI oint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants), where most ethnic rganisations are represented, we sometimes sit together and iscuss where we are going, our strategy. Likewise in the Labour arty, it is necessary to get together and discuss things, call it lack sections, caucuses or whatever. Surely there is no harm in ogether discussing a common strategy. But in relation to the ıbour movement as a whole, and in relation to overall politics, in ıy opinion, if black people in their own ethnic organisations are ot strongly united, and if they are not able to fight on the issues hich are affecting them, they will not be able to take on the roader issues, broader sections of the community, class organisa- ons, they won't be able to take them on and push them further.

What we are arguing about is, on the one hand, a strategy to work ithin a particular party uniting black people on one basis, and on the ther hand, other people involved in different aspects of that struggle utside of that institution but also perhaps within other institutions.

A Sivanandan My point would be that black sections are a listraction from the struggle that the black community has to face oday. And also to make the point to Diane that I simply do not gree that black sections have come out of community struggle.

Perhaps we are confusing two perspectives. One is the perspective of the Labour Party and the other is the perspective of the left lack movement to give it that name. The black sections belong to he Labour Party. But I'm not so sure that they belong to the black novement. They belong to the Labour Party for at least two easons. It is the failure of the Labour Party and the labour novement as a whole in the first instance to support the struggles f black working people, and in the second instance to incorporate he history of those struggles into the history and traditions of the vhite working class movement, that has thrown up the demand or black sections, for black representation. It is by default of Labour Party policy, it is because of Labour Party racism that the lemand for black sections has arisen. And Kinnock is a fool not to ee that. It belongs to the tradition of the Labour Party, not to the raditions of black struggles in this country over the last 20 or 30 ears. Certainly it belongs to the Labour Party because the Labour Party says that it is a federation of interests, that it is a broad church, so why shouldn't it have black sections? My point is hey have taken on an aura of radicalism precisely because Kinnock has refused to entertain the idea of black sections within he Labour Party.

My second point is that the black sections were not thrown up in the course of black struggle, in the course of ordinary black working class struggle, they are not organic to the black movement in other words. Instead – that is why I'm very keen to get away from any personal appraisals – black sections consist of a handful of aspiring black middle class people who have been blocked in their way up the Labour hierarchy. First they set up parallel organisations within the trade unions, like the Black Media Workers Association and black groups within NALGO and the Black Trade Union Solidarity Movement, then they graduated into establishing black sections within the Labour Party. Not only have they not been thrown up by the struggles of the black community, by ordinary black people, they don't even



Vishnu Sharma

relate to them. And there is a reason for this. Here I'm in slight disagreement with Stuart, I'm not as hopeful as him. I think a class stratification has taken place within the black community which we have to look at. There isn't a black *qua* black movement any more. In that sense, if Stuart says there are many paths I would agree. Because of this stratification, we find that the black sections speak for the interests of the black middle class. This is absolutely true on the ground, in terms of jobs, promotion, social acceptance, economic mobility and so on.

Black sections speak to those things, they do not speak, Stuart, to the rabid racism of inner cities, they do not speak to what Unmesh has been talking about. They do not speak to the horrendous racist attacks that are mounted on our people in the ghettoes. They do not speak to the violence perpetrated by the National Front, by the British Movement, by the British National Movement and all these people. And these things have increased 15-fold in the last five to ten years. Then there is the impunity with which these attacks are carried out and police indifference, you look at the Newham 7 case, or the Bradford 12. The police, far from finding the culprits, don't acknowledge the murders and arsons, as racial attacks. And then when we defend ourselves, we are taken to court, penalised and rendered defenceless.

In that context, I find the black sections a distraction from the main issues that face the bulk of the black community in the inner cities. What this stratification I was talking about earlier does is take away the black expertise from where it is needed most, in the ghettoes. And I cannot agree with Stuart that black sections might radicalise Labour politics. If they were thrown up by the black struggle, in the course of the struggle that I've been talking about, and not attached themselves as something extraneous, then I think it could radicalise both black and Labour politics. But, as it is, I see it as a distraction from the struggles that are going on at this particular moment of time.

Stuart I don't disagree with a lot of what Siva says. I certainly don't disagree about racism in the Labour Party. Who could, given the history of the last 20 years? But the difference is that I don't follow the logic by which you say black sections are created by that. Black sections are created in response to that, which is a different question. The forms in which the leadership of the Labour Party offer political participation have always been informed by reformism, containment of the class struggle etc. And other people have occupied those forms and transformed them into something else. So the fact that it suits the Labour Party to contain blacks in black sections isn't a clue to what black sections in reality will become if forms of black struggle choose to occupy that site and transform it. What I'm worried about in what you say is that you take political forms as given, because they come from one source, but we must see them as points around which people struggle and seek to transform them. In the same way as rights are given to people to contain them and yet they can then transform them.

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Diane If black sections are as irrelevant, as some argue, I can never understand why people spend so much energy attacking them and denouncing us. As to your point, Siva, that black sections and the people in them are totally divorced from, and have nothing to do with, black community struggle, this is not our experience. All you have to do is look at the response where we have organised in Southall, Brixton, Paddington and Hackney, and look at the people involved. You will see the connection between the black sections organisation now and the struggles that went on in the 60s and 70s. You just have to look at the individuals involved and at where we are going. It isn't a separate organisation, separate personnel, with no relation to what's happening in black politics. That's the first point. But the second point is that it's interesting to me that people wish to denounce black sections in the name of some notional black movement. Because there are things within black sections which I think represent a real departure from what has gone before. For example, it is a move away from patriarchy and clientism. And obviously there are some people that have been around in black politics for a long time who find the notion that you can move away from patriarchy extremely threatening.

Stuart But what about the argument that for the mass of people who are involved in black struggles and resistance now, there is a great danger in becoming too preoccupied with the internal organisation of the Labour Party? To do that is clearly to give political energy to an extremely confined and contained form of politics.

Diane We don't seek to distract. I've always said that people within institutions, be it the labour movement or whatever, are only as strong as the autonomous black organisation outside. We don't seek to distract, we don't seek to suck energy in. It is the overblown response to black sections both from other black people and the white establishment which in a sense has generated the energy.

Siva That is exactly my point. It is Kinnock's failure to incorporate black sections into the Labour Party hierarchy that has given it so much publicity, and given this aura of radicalism to black sections. It doesn't belong in our debate, in the debate of black people.

To what extent has the position of the black community improved?

Unmesh We've got the GLC, we've got race relations units, we've got this black here, that black there. You see more black people on television, they've given us *Eastern Eye, Western Eye*, they've given us *Black on Black, White on Black*. But what is the political situation facing our people today? In my opinion it's much more desperate than at any time before. And if you walk down any high street and talk to black people, they're going to say what black sections, what Labour Party? Two fingers to that. We want jobs, we want the police off our backs or else we'll fight the police and racist attacks on our own. My objection to black sections is that they tend to obscure the real struggle. Any struggle that does not address itself to the racism of the white working class is irrelevant, is quite wrong. The majority of black people have got to live side by side with white working class people, they've got to drink in the same pubs, shop in the same shopping centres, go to school with them, and they get racially attacked by those people. Any strategy has got to relate to white working class people. We've got to start challenging the racism of that white work class. I'll give you an example. In the course of the Newhan trial, the links we forged with the Orgreave miners – with th sending us a telegram, us writing back to them, and then th coming down to Newham – was a very good example, beca they are challenging the racism in practice. I do not want to tu my back on them because I have to live with them. The differe between us and them is that we get racial attacks because of t colour of our skin.

This is where I want to bring Vishnu's point in. I don't want make this a dichotomy between the new generation and the o generation because the next generation have to learn from t older generation. And I have the utmost respect for the old generation because in the 50s they actually formed organisatio they learned from each others' experiences, came togeth collectively, and did not turn their backs on their class, unli some of the new elements coming up in black struggle. And tha what we've got to carry on doing out in the communities. Tha where the real struggle is.

The only reason I want to attack black sections is that the peo in them have got the arrogance to try to say that that is t struggle. Diane can come here and say otherwise, but I've se leading people on the steering committee who have said 'becau you're not in black sections, what are you doing brother?' I wa to get down to the basics of building black organisations that c put real pressure on Labour Parties. Let's have black MPs a black councillors, but they have got to come from the struggle n from automatic representation on the NEC. In Newham, my are the white councillors are better than the black councillors. That the sad fact of life. And it is something I will say quite proudly a openly, because those black councillors bear no relationship to t they are not accountable to us.

Stuart I see those problems, but I'm surprised you don't see a relationship between the struggle of those black people who a within the Labour Party and the problem of attacking whi racism. If you say that the real problem is maintaining t momentum of the black struggle then I can see that black sectio are a distraction. But if you are concerned, and I am concerne about the question of the white working class, you have recognise that the Labour Party is a majority working class part It has hegemonised the working class since the beginning of t twentieth century, whether we like it or not. It's not a party I lik It's not a party of which I am a member. But historically that is s So the black struggle must have some idea about how to get in that organisationally, how to transform that organisation. No you might say that you can't transform it internally only, and quite agree with that. But I say back to you that you can't on transform it externally. At some point you have to get into th double struggle which is both with and against, and that requir taking the fight inside the constituency parties and also inside th TUC, inside trade union organisations, blowing it apart from th inside. Making the internal structured organisation of the labo movement aware of the impact and history of racism.

Siva I have absolutely no difference with you on that questio My point is that the black sections as constituted today, as w know them, are totally incapable of doing this within the Labo Party.

Stuart But that is a different argument. That is not an argume in principle. That is an argument in terms of the actu constitution of the sections.

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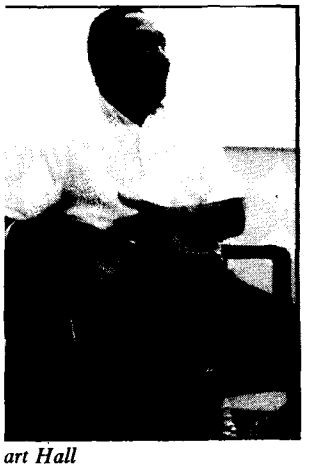
how do you see the present priorities, Vishnu?

ihnu First of all I am in favour of black organisations, above strong ones. The IWA in West London at one time had a paid mbership of up to 15,000, and authority. And from the ources within the community, not from the GLC or urban aid, bought the biggest cinema in the town, a place of our own. neone once came to the Dominion Cinema and when he saw) Englishmen standing at the doors of the cinema checking kets, he said 'this is the real black power. You yourselves bilised, and now these Englishmen are working as employees black organisations.' We must have strong organisations of our n taking up the issues which are currently most disturbing the ck or Asian communities. But it is not only a question of ckness. It is also a class issue, and thus the need for links with trade union movement, and creating an impact within the



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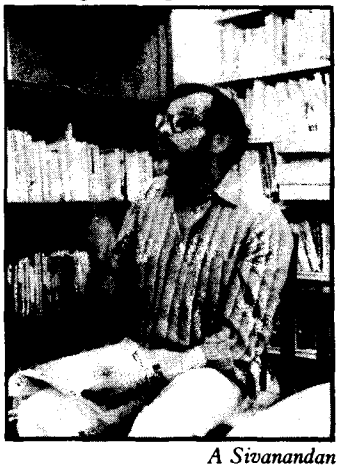

A Sivanandan

de union movement. At the same time, this must all be lected within political parties, including the Labour Party. ow how do you use that strength to make your position strong hin the Labour Party. Most of the points Diane has made I ee with. But as Siva mentioned, if some people in the Labour rty have no connection with the trade union movement, and ver involve themselves in the day-to-day activities of their own nic minority organisations, and instead use that strength from tside within the Labour Party to boost their morale and image thin the Labour Party, then I think we must be cautious here out being used. That in my opinion is sheer opportunism. The ck movement's strength outside the Labour Party will be the gest factor in making the Labour Party leadership realise that re are people who are disturbed and agitated who we must give ention to. But as we know the leadership has not been in touch th the basic needs of the black community. I don't think we fer on this, we are all aware of the sort of institutionalised ism the Labour Party has expressed when it has been in power. ow I recognise that there must be a fight within the Labour rty, my fear in this respect is based on what I have seen in uthall. The seven Asian Labour councillors do not involve mselves in the ethnic minority struggle, in the trade union vement, yet call themselves socialists. I have been in the mmunist Party since I came here. I've dealt with three Labour vernments and that did not encourage me, to put it mildly, to n the Labour Party. But I certainly have no objection if people rk in the Labour Party, without any opportunism, but pushing cause of the black movement within the Labour Party and olving the grassroots black communities in the Labour Party d *vice versa*, if they wish to, and if they don't choose to join the ' for any reason.

Diane Unmesh mentioned the problems of engaging with white working class racism. If you organise within the Labour Party, believe me you are engaging with the problem of white working class racism. If you want to duck white working class racism, the Labour Party is not the place to go. Now with regard to black councillors, I think it's fair to say that a lot of black people who joined the Labour Party in the recent past had no politics. That's precisely why they joined the Labour Party. Who would join a racist organisation like that if you had any conception of black politics or if you were a socialist? You got a type of black person joining the Labour Party who was on the run from any notion of black politics. They wanted to be liked by white people and that's why they were in the Labour Party. Some of these people became councillors. But it isn't fair to identify those people, who in many cases don't support black sections, and some of whom are horrified by the very notion of black autonomous organisation, with black sections, because they represent a different group.

Let me ask another question. Why does Kinnock find what is in some ways a very modest demand for autonomous black organisation so unacceptable? What explains the violence of his reaction and the total intransigence of the leaders of the big unions like the TGWU. They were horrified. It was the last thing they wanted. I suggest it is because the demand for autonomous black organisation in the labour movement is ultimately, though not inevitably, a transforming demand, it poses a direct challenge to their power as it has been structured.

Siva Just because Kinnock and sections of the Labour Party have refused to take on black sections does not give black sections credibility in the eyes of black people. That's neither here nor there. Now when I keep on repeating that it is not organic to black struggles, what I'm trying to say is that there has been a stratification in the black community. Precisely because of the uprisings of 1981, there has been a certain upwards mobility within the black community. The black sections consist of people from the middle class, with an educational background which allows them to know how to handle Labour Party and trade union machinery. They are machine politicians, not grassroots politicians. The other point is that when I talked about black sections being a distraction, it's actually worse than that, they have changed the terms of debate so that the attacks, the racism visited on ordinary black communities, is no longer the focus of attention. There is a whole area of working class culture which is fascist, which is NF. That's what we should be discussing here.

Vishnu I am very concerned about East London. We don't have the same situation in Southall as events there. That's because nobody has dared to come to Southall, especially since 8 July 1981, when there was a spontaneous attack by skinheads on the community, and the community spontaneously responded to it. That was not a case of organised resistance. But that spontaneity, that enthusiasm, emerged because of the 1979 events in Southall, over the National Front election meeting, when 342 people were charged. Had we left those 342 cases on their own – and in many places the community did nothing – the July 1981 situation would not have emerged. 1979 generated an enthusiasm, that if something happened then at least the community is able to defend us. These issues have to be tackled. The black sections should discuss these issues and involve themselves, not only within the Labour Party, but on the ground.

But let me raise here perhaps the biggest issue of all, that of black unity. There are now, in the Asian community, three

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national Indian Workers Associations, all calling themselves the Indian Workers Association. With the emergence of the Punjab issue, the Sikh organisations are asserting that the Hindus are dominating, in CRCs (Community Relations Councils) and many other places, and the Hindus are being promoted in the civil service here to top jobs and Sikhs are being ignored. This is the biggest problem within the Indian community itself which is reflected in anti-Hindu or anti-Sikh sentiments. I am posing the question of black unity and how we forge that unity, which for the last three decades we have been fighting to create.

Unmesh I don't want to discuss the question of black unity, because I don't think we can have a simple prescriptive answer or anything like that. It's got to come out of struggles and practice on the ground. If you look at the Newham 7 demonstrations, there was a fantastic unity of Asian and Afro-Caribbean youth. I don't think the way forward is simple, but we've got to look at the lessons that Vishnu has been outlining, and that is the real struggle, struggle in action, a struggle to make links with the white working class wherever possible, not turning our backs on them in a black nationalistic approach or in autonomous organisations that don't try to work with the white working class people. That is the way forward. The real struggles are out in the communities.

Stuart I don't think you are interpreting what Vishnu said quite accurately. He didn't talk only about the importance of the struggle in the community. He related the strength of the community in 1981 with the defence in 1979 which was not only an organisation out there on the ground. It ran all the way through to legal and civil rights struggles. It was right across the front, the 1979 struggle. The unity created in Southall at that time, which made it possible to react in 1981 in the way in which it did, could not have included that wide range of a variety of people in that area if it had only concentrated on the sharpest forms of resistance in the community. That community base is the absolute heart of the black struggle. But we must look at the ways in which it can then generate other forms of struggle in other organisations, that is the long march through every single institution in which black people live, the reverberations in what might appear to be reformist organisations, parents organisations, whatever it might be. That is the dynamo, but the dynamo has to have an echo elsewhere. Or else you have a struggle which is constantly contained only in the activist section of the black movement which doesn't touch what we all know is the variety of other people in the black movement who, except at the flashpoints, do not identify themselves with those forms of resistance. My problem is how to win support for those key struggles from a vast variety of other people in the society who are in the middle of things. Sometimes they lean that way, their kids are picked up on the street. But in between they don't necessarily come out in that way, to fight other people's struggles. How do you build a movement like that? It can't be by just resting on the base of the most activist people you already have. It has to have an expanding politics. And an expanding politics always has to begin to negotiate with people in a more reformist situation, with people who might be pulled this way and that with the possibilities of mobility. They have to be brought over to the side of the working class. The attitude which says 'we know what the struggle is, we know what the issues are, we know who supports them and anybody who isn't already in that politics is by definition not in the black movement', is not a way of increasing its strength. I think it's a politics which is strong and entrenched – and contained. □

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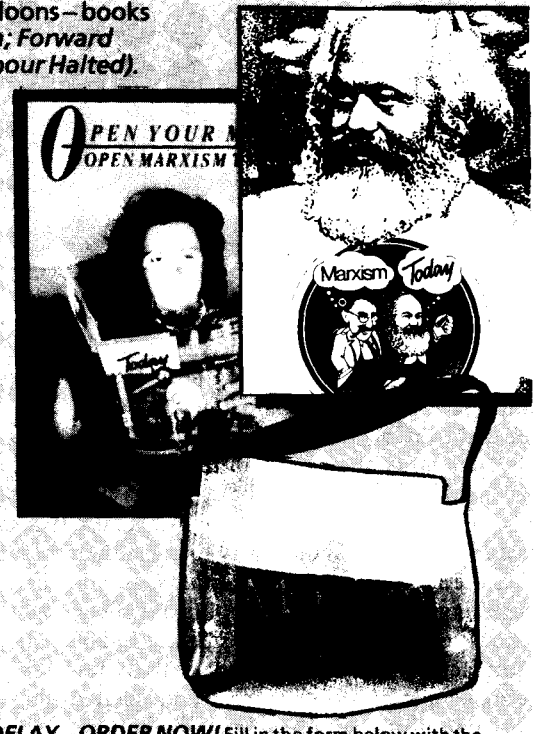

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)WN GOALS AND PENALTIES

Alan Bairner

Football fans: Will the 'real' hooligans please stand up?

t the start of every football season, non-thusiasts complain that the previous one ever ended. This year, at least, they're ght. Having pushed its way from the ack pages of the tabloids to national and ternational headlines, football has been nsured maximum coverage throughout ie summer months. A series of serious icidents have transformed the game into a olitical issue as never before. The Belgian overnment fell as a direct result of events urrounding the tragic European cup final t the Heysel Stadium in Brussels and, at ome, the Prime Minister has decided to age war on the terracing hooligans. As a onsequence, it is almost inevitable that ootball will continue to make the news, or one reason or another, in the season 985-6. What's more, despite the curious nd insensitive government decision to onsider the awful fire at Bradford City's Valley Parade Ground in conjunction with otally unrelated crowd trouble, it is foot-all violence, rather than accidental ragedy or events on the field of play, which will remain the big issue.

Crowd trouble is, of course, nothing iew. In the past, however, incidents were isually provoked by events on the field or t least connected directly with football. Never before have football grounds been ised so consistently for the purposes of premeditated violence.[1] Even now the ictual incidence of crowd disturbance is considerably exaggerated, given the num-ber of people who attend regularly and the passions aroused in them. But, the prob-em is real and, although Robert Maxwell issured us that Liverpool supporters acted is they did in Brussels because of the pervasive influence of left wing ideology in heir native city, the Left cannot afford to ivoid it. In fact, we should all have, by iow, a fairly clear idea of the multiple problems which generate football hooli-ganism. High on our list come social leprivation, unemployment, inner city de-cay, social dislocation and a misplaced sense of masculinity.[2] We should add perhaps the jingoism which is rampant in our society. It is ironic that a Prime Minister who sanctioned the deaths of Argentinian conscripts in the name of national interest is ashamed when Union Jack-waving young Britons cause the deaths of rival football fans on foreign soil. To understand the nature of the problem, however, is insufficient. Indeed, no amount of sympathy for the troubles of the perpetrators of football violence can lessen the pain of a bottle in the head or a knife in the back. So the Government is correct on one score. Something has to be done.

It is inconceivable, of course, that this particular government, which in two periods of office has shown virtually unparalleled insensitivity to the needs and aspirations of the bulk of the population, is capable of an adequate response to the symptoms, far less the basic causes, of football violence. Their pious deliberations, however, have led to a number of proposals.

Crowd segregation already exists and is a necessary evil which could be further reinforced if supporters introduced more self-policing. The proposed ban on alcohol is also worth a try. Legislation to that effect has helped to reduce crowd trouble in Scotland, although it should be remembered that, there, it followed a general relaxing of licencing laws so that football grounds no longer play the role of oases for people who want to drink on Saturday afternoons. But, in any case, far more controversial are the other government proposals – identity cards, a ban on away support, extra police and closed circuit television for crowd surveillance.

Both the travel ban and ID cards raise important issues of civil liberty. (Mrs

[1] See Tony Mason, 'Association Football and English Society 1863-1915' *Harvester* 1980 pp 160-7.

[2] For a fuller account of the reasons for football violence see John Williams 'Enter the Dragon' *Marxism Today* May 1985 pp 2-3.

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Thatcher has frequently toyed with the idea of introducing identity cards, under some pretext or another). A selective ban on away supporters (picking out the troublemakers) could work and yet it seems to be regarded as too complicated despite the ease with which the police mounted similar operations during the miners' strike. It is true, however, that, in any event, both proposals rest on naive beliefs – that troublemakers wouldn't get ID cards and that they lack the intelligence to travel to games without the trappings of football support. (It is common knowledge that already many of those involved in the worst scenes of violence prefer their own stylish dress to the traditional scarves and woollen hats).

The main thrust of government policy is that football violence is ultimately football's problem. In practice, this means that the financial burden for finding solutions will fall heavily on clubs themselves. Each of the Government's proposals, including extra police at games, will cost football a great deal of money. Thus, the reaction of the game's spokesmen has been to plead poverty and to argue, legitimately, that the problem is not theirs alone. Mrs Thatcher who has read, it seems, about high transfer fees and big wages refuses to believe their story. In truth, of course, the sums involved paint a wholly inaccurate picture of the state of British football, particularly in the lower divisions. Furthermore, the Football Grounds Improvement Trust, funded by *Spot The Ball* competitions, has only a £3.6m budget which is nothing like enough to meet the costs of safety measures recommended in the wake of the Bradford fire, let alone elaborate schemes for crowd control.

The football authorities have been forced to introduce their own *Top Score* pools to compete with the major pools companies, whose profits are often cited by the Football Association and the League as evidence of the way cash is drained from the sport. For financial reasons and legitimate misgivings about their efficacy, therefore, many of the Government's proposals are being resisted. Only two clubs, Oxford and Reading, have introduced a full ID card system whilst 13 others are operating partial schemes. Closed circuit television existed in 12 grounds last season and is being introduced in at least another 35. The stark truth is, however, that as big a club as Leeds United has been obliged to sell its ground to the local council and a rough guess suggests that about a dozen clubs should be out of business by the time the season ends. Not surprisingly, therefore, the football authorities look to the Government for solutions to crowd violence which will not cost clubs money and which include stiffer fines, longer prison sentences, corporal punishment and even national service.

The Thatcher government's response to football hooliganism is, if anything, less surprising than that of the football people themselves. If football violence is perceived solely as a football problem, then what better solution than to hasten the sport's downfall? Few of her cabinet and only a minority of her supporters would care. The football establishment, however, has everything to lose and, regardless of economic considerations and despite the truth that the real problems extend far beyond the organisation and presentation of British football, the authorities might be expected to be more positive in their assessment of their cultural difficulties.

Whether they like it or not, the peop who run football are partially to blame f the mess the game is in. They have tran formed a sport, once firmly rooted in tl community, into a business enterprise, f removed from the life experience of mo spectators who have become valuable b not particularly valued commodities. Pla ers have been turned into aloof superstar no longer necessarily linked to the fans b the common bond of love for a tean Entertainment has been sacrificed on tl high altar of the philosophy of 'getting result'. Even the once revered club colou are now mobile advertising hoardings. Th only real winners are the sponsors who ca easily move to pastures new if the rot se in deeper. The danger is that most suppo ters, frustrated by what the game ha become, will go with them.

Football is worth saving from fals friends and enemies alike. It has a vit place in the hearts of many British peopl and, probably, more than any other spor it binds the international community (Even in the sad aftermath of Brussels, th true football fan knew that not leas amongst the many losers were the Ju ventus supporters denied the chance t celebrate fully their team's long-awaite European Cup success). The change which the problems of football deman need not lead in the direction of th American soccer experiment. Footba fails there precisely because it lacks th roots which, for better or worse, sustai the British game. Those who run footba must remember these roots and seek t keep their sport in closer contact with th realities which face their greatest suppor ters. Ultimately, of course, the communi ties in which the roots are planted need t be rebuilt and reorganised. In the mean time, what does the new season have i store for us?

We can certainly anticipate a series o big matches between the football establish ment and the Government – the former desperate to avoid defeat and possibl relegation and committed mistakenly t defensive tactics, and the latter, deter mined to continue to divert public atten tion from fundamental issues by attacking the symptoms of our current malaise in stead of its causes. The wild men will wai on the sidelines ready to intervene. It is no a pleasant prospect. But, who knows With a bit of luck, season 85-86 might als include promotion for Dunfermline Athle tic, continued success for Hull City and ar Irish League title for Glentoran.

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DOLEFUL BRITAIN

A one day conference with

Goran Therborn (Author of 'Why Some Peoples are More Unemployed than Others)

Keeva Coombes (Leader of Merseyside County Council)

Chair: *George Bolton* (Vice-President of NUM, Scotland)

Contributions from *Eddie Bannon* (GMWU) and *Paul Thompson* (Lecturer), joint authors of "Working the System, The Shopfloor and New Technology"; *John Duncan* (Chairman of the Merseyside County Council); *Roger O'Hara* (Co-operative Development worker); *Bobby Lamb* (TGWU) and others.

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PENGUIN'S PROGRESS?

Ken Worpole

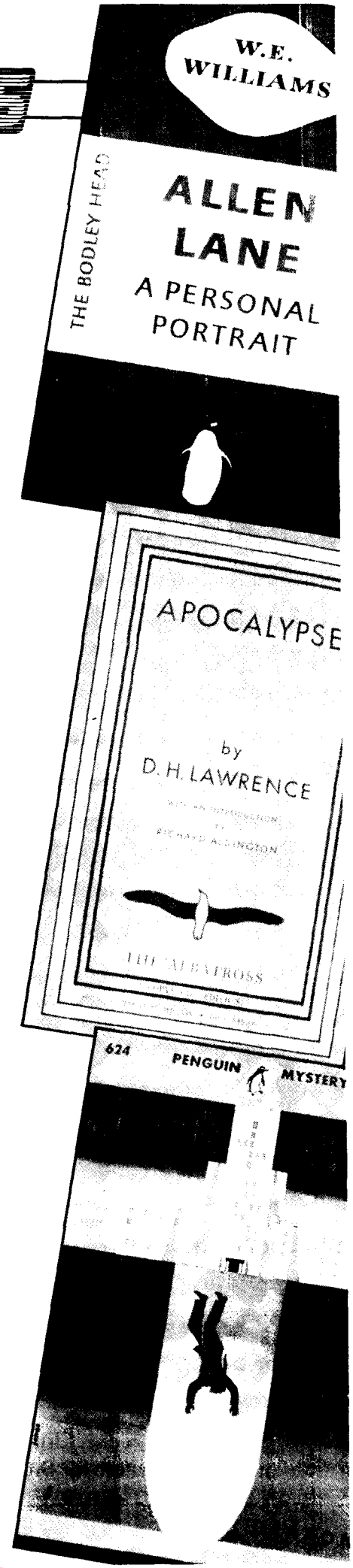
The struggle for cheap books has always been a defining characteristic of popular political and cultural movements. The 'right' of people to the new forms of knowledge, to contemporary literature at prices they could afford, was a part of nineteenth century liberal (and entrepreneurial) thinking. 'Books for the people!' was a rallying cry for the utilitarians, the Chartists, publishers who had spare capacity on their new rotary presses, free-thinkers and auto-didacts as well. Yet 'cheap literature' was quickly constructed around a minefield of ambiguities, many of which remain with us today. For the association of books with cheap prices quickly led to the development of actual new genres around that association: 'penny dreadfuls', 'farthing novels', 'dime novels', 'twopenny trash' and so on. Around the possibilites of cheapness, literary aesthetics contructed notions of inferiority and degraded aesthetics.

Even so it has remained a radical, and revolutionary, demand – and even practice. Standard ideological texts have been published virtually free in many of the self-defined socialist countries. In Cuba, for example, all literary texts have always been free to whoever wants them. So it is not surprising that in Britain Penguin Books have always been considered a major gain for humanist and liberal values, and an object lesson in quality popular publishing. Like, I suspect, the majority of people who read *Marxism Today*, I remain indebted to Penguin's for much of my early, formative reading – bought new or secondhand as and when I could find the books I wanted to read. I can't imagine what life would have been without them.

Yet as the 50th anniversary of Penguin's approaches this autumn, in what is obviously going to be an orgy of self-congratulation, perhaps it is worth just registering a few reservations about the redoubtable Penguin's Progress. For the continuity – to be grossly unfair I know – between the recent Penguin launching of *Lace 2* at the Ritz in the midst of champagne, roast duck, handmade chocolates and a promotional speech which spoke of the honour of being associated with something 'as fine, as rare and as rewarding as this book', and the fairly sober earnestness of Allan Lane's original project, is becoming increasingly difficult to see. For the commercial cynicism which launched *Lace 2* to the Penguin public – the kind of book which is known to publishers as the 'oven-ready trade' – is of a different order to the commercial and intellectual acumen which made Allan Lane realise in 1935 that given the right distribution networks (and the sale of Penguins through Woolworth's was a major ingredient in the success of the venture), the right mix of titles, some energetic promotion, it was possible to publish cheap books in large quantities and make a successful business out of it. Not that Penguin's were the first to do this. For there had been for many years two paperback publishing companies in Europe, Tauschnitz and Albatross, who had published hundreds of novels and plays by British and American writers *in English* for expatriate English speakers living abroad and for Europeans wishing to read contemporary fiction written in English in its original language. There was a copyright ban on these books being sold in Britain, but numbers of them did get into this country, and many can still be found in secondhand bookshops.

The first ten Penguin titles were a careful, even cautious, mix of worthy biography and autobiography, middle-brow fiction and one or two important and innovative contemporary novels, notably Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. The more interesting developments happened two years later with the addition of the Pelican list (serious non-fiction) and the Penguin Specials (highly contemporary social issues). The first Penguin Special, *Germany Puts The Clock Back*, by Edgar Mowrer sold 50,000 copies in the first week before being immediately reprinted. This was, suddenly, radical publishing indeed. For the times, ironically, were propitious for the serious popular publisher. Gollancz had started the Left Book Club in 1936 and was able to secure print runs of 50,000 plus for many of his titles, even in hardback.

Yet in a way, Penguin books ideally suited the growing collectivist and earnest spirit of the late 1930s and the 1940s, naturally including the war years. If ever a publisher found a political and cultural milieu into which they naturally fitted, it was Penguins in that period. The austere cover designs which used single blocks of



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ır to denote the series – orange for n, green for thrillers, blue for travel adventure, red for biographies and w for miscellaneous – and the bold graphy, combined to express the optic collectivism of the war and the war social settlement. In Richard sman's account of his first election paign as a Labour candidate in Coven- n 1945, he wrote despairingly of the our Party's failure to provide any ligent political reading matter for both idates and voters, as a way of generat- nterest in the Labour Party's election ramme. 'Every twopenny or epenny pamphlet at open air meetings nmediately snapped up and usually for with silver, for which no change is d. I believe that if we had in stock 00 Penguins we could have sold them y. The free literature is glanced ugh and tossed away. What we sell is n home and thrown back at us at the open air meeting in the form of ise and thoughtful questions.'

s someone born at the end of the war, I v up consciously or unconsciously ciating Penguin books with the best lities of the popular radicalism of that and therefore an integral part of the alist project. Yet as the postwar 'settle- ıt' began to falter and then collapse as h excessivley cold winters and exces- ly cold wars began to divide the popu- radical movement from within, (for ple wanted an end to austerity and a re in the promised consumer riches red by free-market ideologies) so Pen- n's too encountered problems. There , for example, the interesting split with American company, substantially over use of illustrated covers. The American npany wanted picture covers, but Allan ne certainly didn't. So they went their n two ways.

But also, suddenly other paperback blishers were beginning to spring up in tain, with similar concerns for quality ss publishing – but different methods! e Books, for example, started by Frank dman in 1956, published serious Euro- ın and American writers – but gave a e hand to the book illustrators to illus- te them how they wished. So the post- r Italian social realist writers such as ravia, Silone, Calvino, Flaiano, writing partisan struggles, urban poverty, poli- al intrigue, were wrapped in lurid covers ıich showed Silvana Mangano and Gina llabrigida lookalikes standing on street rners in provocatively torn dresses, quietly smouldering. The books sold in their tens of thousands. Ace and Digit (but particularly Ace) looked like pulp publishers, but they introduced new writers to English readers that Penguin's wouldn't have dared to: Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, Gore Vidal, Tennessee Williams, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Chester Himes, Samuel Selvon, JD Salinger, Cesare Pavese, and so on.

These were the writers, as John Sutherland has so shrewdly noted, that the public libraries in the 1950s would not allow within a mile of their shelves. As he wrote in *Fiction and the Fiction Industry* in 1978: 'The paperback revolution of the late 1950s and 1960s gained much of its energy from fiction which the public library could be expected to disapprove of: *Woman of Rome, The Ginger Man, Lolita, Lady Chatterley's Lover, The Naked and the Dead, Catch 22, Candy.* Anyone who wanted to keep up with the frontiers of permissive fiction was forced out of the libraries; paperbacks often had the glamour, as it were, of an informal *Index Librorum, Prohibitum.*'

What is significant about this list is that not one of these books, as far as I know, was published by Penguin. The revolution had overtaken them. Meanwhile Allan Lane kept a fairly sharp eye on what Penguin would or would not publish. In 1966 Lane discovered that Penguin had published a book of cartoons by the French cartoonist Sine. Disliking the collection so much he entered the warehouse one night, loaded the entire stock on to a farm trailer and took it away and made a bonfire of it.

Despite this aberration, in the 1960s Penguin's did regain a lot of their radical and campaigning zeal, apart from their continuing programme of quality fiction publishing. The red 'Penguin Specials' – Raymond Williams on 'Communications', Ben Whitaker on 'The Police', Philip O'Connor on 'Vagrancy' and so on – were up to the minute, well researched but polemical contributions to contemporary social and political debates which helped form public opinion and even change legislation. The 'Penguin Eduation' series of the 1960s and early 1970s (until little Penguin got stabbed in the back by big Penguin!) was for me the most wonderful and inspiring collection of books about education that there could possibly be: *Letter to a Teacher, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Reading, How to,* confirmed one's belief then that radical educational practice was *the* key to political and cultural revolution. People couldn't wait to buy them as they came into the shops; well, some people.

In the 1970s Penguin seemed to be losing its grip. It was neither successful radical, nor successful commercial. The covers of the novels were often dreadful – particularly where there had been a film made of the novel and so Penguin covers mixed film stills with other elements and ended up with covers that looked as though they had fallen off the back of a lorry in Denmark Street. Penguin Education had been preemptorily shut down, Penguin Poetry curtailed, Penguin Specials as far as I can remember were also dropped, and meanwhile other publishers were moving into the quality paperback scene with a vengeance. The new development of the 1970s was the 'trade paperback', a larger format book with a very high class of design which sold at a rather higher price. Sphere's 'Abacus' and Granada's 'Paladin', Pan's 'Picador' imprints, and of course 'Virago' all began to produce important classic and contemporary fiction in elegantly designed large format paperbacks for the bookshop trade.

Large format paperbacks have given a new life to much important established writing, and have also been a vehicle for the rediscovery of many forgotten but important writers, particularly women writers as the continuing success of Virago has shown. Large format, attractively designed books of biography, history, intellectual theory, and so on have also brought new readers to established texts. Yet I do not think they answer all the problems of meeting the needs of the contemporary reading public – including the need to literally be able to put them in a jacket or coat pocket with ease and convenience. For to begin with, to many people they *seem* expensive at £3.95 or £4.95, particularly for fiction, even if compared with other cultural commodities they are not.

Secondly, the over-dependence on a new classicism in cover design – the frequent use of reproductions of exquisitely coloured old paintings, pastoral scenes, still lifes with geraniums, Camden School townscapes – has effectively sealed off the text reducing the books simply to artefacts: which is both good and bad at the same time. I regret the loss of the cheap, pocket book edition of the novel or biography I want to read, in the way that I regret that the political impulse that went into earlier forms of mass publishing is current-

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TABLETS OF STONE?

The year 2,000 looms. As the century closes, socialists will need more to work on than the belief in Unchanging Truths about the working class. Britain is changing fast. Old industries and skills are vanishing; whole communities are in crisis. New technology is changing all our lives. How will working people and their organisations respond? How can the Left regain the popular support currently held for Thatcherite ideas and policies?

The Communist Party, along with others, wants to see socialism restored as the 'common sense' of our age. Communists believe that the working class and its organisations are at the centre of revolutionary change – but go-it-alone attitudes will be disastrous. We need to build an alliance of ***all*** the progressive forces in Britain. Mass, popular movements hold the key to socialist change. That's why Communists are involved in the peace movement, and have been active in miners' support groups all over the country. The Communist Party is a ***campaigning*** party.

Building an alliance that can defeat the right will be a long and difficult process. There are no simple answers. But then there were never any Unchanging Truths, either.

. . . or politics for Britain in the 80's?

☐ I would like to join/know more about The Communist Party/The Young Communist League.

☐ I would like a copy of the Party's programme *The British Road to Socialism* (price 60p inc. postage).

☐ I would like to know more about Communist Party activities in my area.

Name_____

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_____

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Send to: Gordon McLennan, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY.
Tel: 01-251 4406

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in abeyance. One gets the feel of that in ne of the accounts of designing paper-cks in America in the 1940s when a lot of ogressive writers and artists and pub-lers combined to get the best of the new tion to a working class readership at the eapest possible prices and with the best innovative design.

Of course there is no longer, if there ever s, a unified 'reading public', and today blishing is more constituency based – ninist, black, locally based – or commer-lly targetted: airport bookstall interna-nal espionage, railway bookstall ro-nce. Penguin's, now part of Pearson , a multi-national publishing con-merate, have become completely mar-t-orientated. They also follow familiar remes of salary levels in accordance h this new regime. Large sums of ney have been paid in advances, and nt on promotion campaigns for novels indifferent worth such as *The Far vilions* and the new Stephen King and ter Straub horror novel *The Talisman*. ey are following the logic of the retail olution of the past decade in which oducers now wish to own their own retail lets. So Penguin are now planning a in of Penguin bookshops throughout tain, or shops-within-shops in large partment stores. The new Penguin shop ablished in Liberty's in Regent Street is rently enjoying a turnover of £500 per iare foot per week!

The book business is, in some respects least, booming and by virtue of the ormous successes of titles such as *The Plan Diet* published in 1982 and Pen-in's fastest selling book of all time, the ng Penguin list of trade paperbacks is e again very impressive indeed. But it is ubtful if we shall see the same range of nguin Specials again, nor the enormous-diverse and speculative Penguin Poetry , not the Education Specials either. So ile everything in publishing at present ms to be doing very well – runs of),000 for the new SAS thriller, runs of ,000 for the new Mills and Boon ro-nce, runs of up to 20,000 for the new ber collection of poems, and runs of up 10,000 for the new feminist thriller – l with the trade format paperback firm-established as *the* dominant format in st paperback publishing now, my own ling is, ironically, that everybody is iting for something new to happen. mething like that bold experiment ich was launched from the Woolworth's inters 50 years ago this month.

THE QUALITY OF MERSEY

Ian Williams

Is there a school of 'Liverpool Writers'? Do the Bleasdale's, Bainbridges, and Beatles have anything in common? Is it just accident of birth that connects Brookside and Eddy Braben, Morecambe and Wise's scriptwriter, with Carla Lane or Willy Russell. Do Alexei Sayle, Craig Charles, Adrian Henri, Brian Patten and Roger McGough share anything but the sound of an adenoidal cold?

There *are* characteristics which distinguish Liverpool, its writers and performers, even the exiles, from other less culturally, if more financially, favoured centres. Liverpool's writers are sardonic, syndicalist and Scouse, if only for alliterative reasons. Incorporated in 'syndicalist' is a line of individualism ranging from Dickensian sentimentality to berserker anarchism, while the 'Scouse' has a deeper significance than just a place of birth.

Unemployment has been part of common Liverpool experience for a century. Even in boom times, in a port, casual labour can be out of work for weeks at a time, and employment in such conditions breeds a casual attitude both to propiety and to property, in which Samuel Smiles' 'Self Help' transmutes to 'Help Yourself'.

Similarly, while the dominance of docks and shipping produced a centralised and dangerously dependent economy, port work itself, with its myriad of occupational divisions, produced a complex multi-layered caste system complicated by divisions between the various ethnic and religious groups. Liverpool was a major Welsh speaking city, Protestant and Catholic Irish, Scots, and even possibly some native English each had occupational and social categories. The effect was to produce an individualism bordering on anarchism, which remains even when the various groups simmered together to produce Scouse, possibly the country's only exclusively urban dialect confined as it is by Welsh on one side and Lancashire thee's and thou's on the other.

The erratic wheel of fortune helped breed the Liverpool sense of humour

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which is perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of Liverpool writers. Frequently incomprehensible to the more stiff upper-lipped outsider, Liverpool black humour often isn't even intended to be funny. It is an anarchistic and sardonic way of trying to trim to size a frequently depressing world, a refusal to be beaten by economic depression, or Margaret Thatcher. Within hours of the Brighton bombing I heard 'Who's the fastest reader in the Tory Party? – Norman Tebbit, he got through three storeys in three seconds'. Tasteless, but then, so is what Norman and his mates have done to the city!

In addition to the two criteria of humour and anarchistic individualism, the third is the language: the vernacular spoken tradition. The Mersey Poets, Brian Patten, Roger McGough and Adrian Henri have broken records for the sale of poetry. They were the start of the whole idea of Liverpool Writers in any sense of a 'literary school' and it is no coincidence that this was in the 60s, the time of the Mersey Sound, and the Beatles, when lyric poetry returned with the modern lyre, the guitar. Perhaps for the first time an essentially working-class dialect became so nationally, indeed internationally, popular that it was possible to *write* with all the vigour and freshness of the spoken word, in a dialect, Scouse, that has an Irish fascination for word-play with an intonation of Welsh music.

Among modern languages English is alone in not having a particular regional dialect as its standard form, but a class argot of convoluted dipthongs. Show me the area which *speaks* standard English, and I'll show you a well-heeled suburban ghetto of affluence.

In Britain, to keep within established literary conventions, a working-class writer has to be bilingual, since written English is almost a different language for him/her. At school s/he is not just asked to learn another language, s/he is asked to forget, to denigrate, the language s/he uses at home if s/he wants to put pen to paper. The effect can be to produce a population that sounds like policemen reading their inventions from the dock, stilted, and unnatural, or the union bureaucrat mistaking polysyllability for profundity.

Connected by the seafarers plying across the Atlantic, Liverpool imbibed some of the demotic cultural traditions, musical and oral, black and white, of New York to add to its own Celtic traditions of refusal to recognise courts and court dialects. So Liverpool's achievements have been in the field of the spoken word, of poetry readings, song lyrics and plays, harnessing the rhythm and vigour of ordinary speech. If you listen to early Beatles' interviews, they were practising a form of oral class warfare on their interviewers.

Deserters from the city like John Lennon and Alexei Sayle as well as those who stayed like Alan Bleasdale and Willy Russell have wielded their dialect like a lethal weapon. Even a long time exile like Paul Kember, author of *Not Quite Jerusalem*, still admits his working class anti heroes in the play were 'inspired' in the cultural Black Hole of Kirkby. Many people like him leave Liverpool as economic exiles, but it is significant how the exiles resist any softening of their own dialect. It is an integral part of their art.

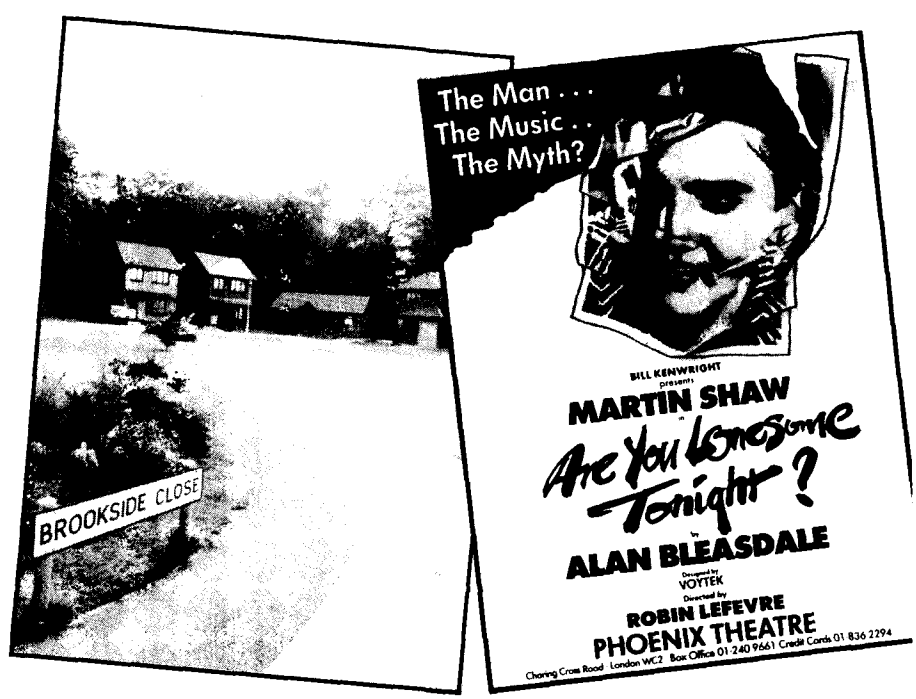
While the dialect is the same, the humour can be gentle or vicious, sometimes in the same author, and the political attitudes will be individualistic, and anti-establishment – anti *any* establishment that is. Almost all the writers and performers, although obviously political in their outlook, avoid entanglement with political organisations. Alan Bleasdale typifies it. Like most of the writers he won't have anything to do with organised politics. Despite the evident anger of the *Black Stuff* series, Bleasdale admits to a 'Dickensian' outlook; that part of the solution just involves people being nice to each oth But while unfairness and injustice s raise his hackles, he says a playwrigl first duty is to 'entertain and illuminat and to slip in any message afterward.'

The continuity, the persistence, of themes can be seen by comparing *Black Stuff* scenes in the DHSS offi with those written over half a century a about the board of guardians' office, George Garret, stoker and ex-Wobb member. It is a long way from Bleasdal anger tempered with sentiment to frenetic viciousness of Alexei Sayle, they are on different ends of the same sc of disgust with the way things are, and li George Garret's tales, the heroes are individuals, while the 'baddy' is the s tem, the authorities in abstract, whate their political label.

Now that Friedmanite capitalism converted that old evil of casual empl ment into an unemployment so hopeles complete that it has become a professi handed down from generation to gene tion, people are trying to tongue and p and play themselves out of their pove the way that boxers used to slog thei People who are unemployed are expect to sit and twiddle their fingers in betwe waiting for the giro cheques, but write workshops and theatre groups are sprin ing up, often alongside and entwined in t prolific and perpetually shifting mu scene like the Scotty Road Writers Workshop.

Subjects range from Greenham Co

From the Beatles to Brookside to Bleasdale: All part of Liverpool's cultural attractions



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on to vignettes of working-class life from e past to the present, but it has now also ven birth to 'Vauxy Theatre', 'The heatre of the People', some members of hich are in turn forming a music act . . . d all when the SS thinks they should sit d wait for the giro. Vauxy has taken the e once occupied by Unity, writing, oducing and playing works ranging from itprop on political fund ballots to knock-out farces and award-winning plays like *e Return of John McDaid* written by one its few employed members, Eddy Ban-n, a GMBATU official.

But perhaps the most novel develop-nt, which at the same time epitomises verpool, comes from what was until ently the most silent and un-noticed rt of the community. The development a distinct black identity in Liverpool pecially since the riots of 1981) is now ginning to show in the artistic field with oups, dancers like Delado – and poets. gene Lange and Levi Tafari with their iot Workshop have evoked the oral ditions of Africa, but with West Indian oping, and the accents, sharpness and ics of Liverpool, they are also very ich part of the Liverpool tradition as Levi demonstrated with his 'Conservative Blues' at Merseyside's People's Festival. 'Land of Hope and Glory, is becoming a horror story', he recited to enthusiastic crowds – who regardless of race, knew exactly whereof he spoke.

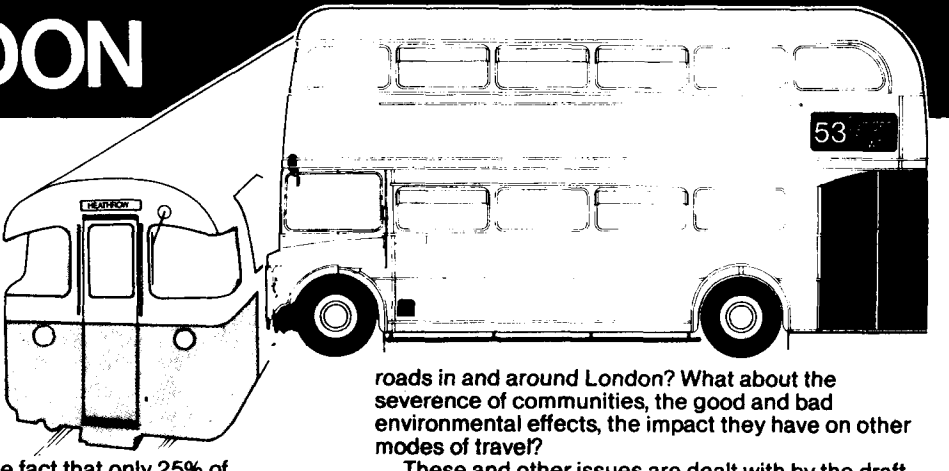
Since the boom years of the 50s and 60s mostly passed the city by, the black community centred in Liverpool 8 is not essentially an immigrant one. Eugene Lange typifies it, 'Pop was half-Negro half Cherokee Indian, (Mom was a Scouser whose father was / German . . .),' and both he and Levi Tafari take pride in Liverpool having possibly the oldest black community in Europe. They drew their inspiration in the 70s from black power, but as Eugene's ancestry demonstrates, Africa is a long way away. They now see themselves as a 'Creole' culture. 'We've been here as long as blacks have been in Jamaica, we've got a black identity, but we also have a Liverpool identity, and they're not contradictory'. 'This poetry is the bastardised slave-masters' tongue, taught to me when I was young', declaims Eugene.

When they first went on tour they were regarded as 'freaks', since black culture to most of their audiences meant African or West Indian culture. But Eugene brings to gether the harshest of Liverpool's experiences:

> . . . That all the oppressed have an equal place
> Whether Black, White, Brown, Red or Yellow face
> (Even Whites are Niggers in Niggerpool 8)
> The ghettoes of the world are Third World states
> John Lennon said woman is the nigger of the world; I say
> *Liverpool is the Nigger of the UK!'*

The development of a black culture in Liverpool, along with the essentially plebeian if not proletarian culture of the city, is an ironic reflection of the 'Venice of the North' which the old patrician merchants hoped to create with the wealth accumulated from cotton, slaves and child labour in the mills of Lancashire. (They even held benefits for the South during the American Civil War). Culture in Liverpool, at least to the extent that it is original, is the product of the non-affluent, the flotsam and jetsam of a receding empire and an industrial counter-revolution, giving them a self confidence, and even a language, to build art from the ruins.

TRANSPORT POLICIES FOR LONDON



Have your say

The GLC believes transport affects all of us in London. But transport planning has often failed to meet the needs of the vast majority of people. It has tended, for example, to concentrate on cars and roadbuilding at the expense of public transport – despite the fact that only 25% of Londoners have direct access to cars. It has paid too little attention to the needs of women and ethnic minority communities. With a limited amount of cash, choices have to be made. Do we build more roads? Do we have a better, cheaper public transport system? How do we make transport more accessible to people with disabilities? Or, even, should we be working towards a 'free fares' policy? We also have to look at how transport affects the Capital's environment.

Lorries are a good example. Do we allow them to use our roads without restriction? And what about the problems posed by the M25 and other major roads in and around London? What about the severence of communities, the good and bad environmental effects, the impact they have on other modes of travel?

These and other issues are dealt with by the draft TPP – the GLC's Transport Policies and Programme. It looks into the medium and long term futures and suggests alternative policies.

It's important that you have your say in the making of these policies. The draft TPP is explained in a very full report, so we've also produced a brief summary. You can get either by writing to:
Greater London Council (TD/PM/PC), County Hall, London SE1 7PB or by phoning 01-633 8447.

GLC
Working for London

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Mailer's pen is bigger than the Norm

Mailer: His Life and Times
Peter Manso, *Viking* £16.95

Norman Mailer has been kind of fucking America into some kind of reaction for nearly 40 years. Through a prodigious output of some 25 books, innumerable articles and media appearances, he has always got it up and provoked pleasure, pain, love, hatred . . . in the cancerous mind of the Great American public. Whatever the response, whatever the cause or ideas or sentiment Mailer has been espousing, whatever his motives, he has still changed America far more than any other contemporary writer.

This biog by Peter Manso, as its title indicates, is an attempt to capture what Mailer is like and how he has affected America. The first thing that caught my attention, though, was not anything Manso writes, even the title, but the actual appearance of the book. It's a whacking 700 pages and the jacket carries a photograph on the front of Mailer and his latest wife (she's the sixth in a line that gets younger and lasts shorter); and on the back is one of Manso. Mailer is standing legs apart, hands on hips, in a truculent, provocative pose; she leans seductively, even submissively, in his shoulder. Despite the sexual stereotyping, that when you read how careful Mailer is about such things you know is deliberate, his expression is worth a thousand words of Manso's text: still puzzled, still curious, and getting wiser.

Looking at Manso, the first thing my educated eye saw was that he sports about £8,000 worth of gold *Rolex* on his wrist and his hair is carefully layered in expensive disarray. About the only other thing you learn about him from this book is that he writes *Playboy* interviews.

This is a fly-on-the-wall biog: it's mainly transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews with Mailer and people who've known him, interlaced with short passages from Mailer's books and reviews of the same, plus a lot of unobtrusive but informative black and white photographs.

I accept Manso's claim that the editing and culling he has done from his *20,000*! pages of transcripts is representative, but I don't accept his claim that 'to allow people to speak in their own voices' is the best way 'to catch the feel of Mailer over the run of 60 years . . .' Facts never speak for themselves and throughout this book I wanted less description of events and more of the framework from which Manso wrote – his relationship to Mailer, how he did the book, and also his interpretation of Mailer's work. This kind of 'oral biography' cheats the reader of his/her traditional right in this genre – to re-interpret the biographer's interpretation of the subject.

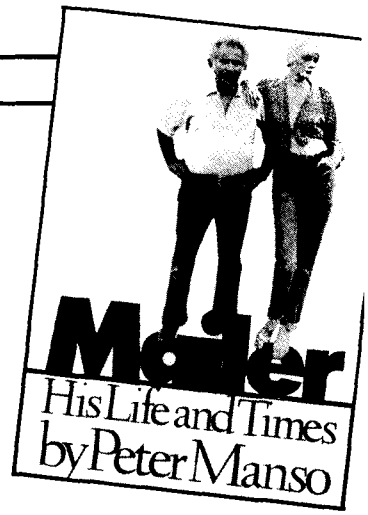
With that said, Manso nonetheless provides us with a fascinating insight into a great American writer's life, and also an abundance of interpretations of Mailer's work from virtually a *Who's Who* of literary America. Again I can't help carping over these not being evaluated, but here one is in better shape to do it oneself – if you're prepared to do the work that usually the biographer takes on.

Mailer achieved his first hard ambition – which was to be a great *commercial* writer – soon after being demobbed. He did that with *The Naked and the Dead* – the big book of the Pacific theatre in the Second World War. Then came *Barbery Shore*, *The Deer Park* – and the masterfully polemical *Armies of the Night* in 1967, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, *Marilyn*, and recently *The Executioner's Song*, a factoid exploration of both Gary Gilmore's execution and the banality of America.

Born in Brooklyn in 1923, the son of a Jewish accountant who gambled, Norman according to his mother was 'perfect, a really lovely baby.' Whenever her husband meddled in Norman's upbringing she'd tell him to leave the baby alone because she knew he was going to be a great man. 'I knew that. Absolutely. Even as he was growing up.' Well, with a worshipping Jewish mother and a 165 IQ, Mailer was clearly going to be special and it is hardly surprising that he proved difficult too.

After Harvard and the army, Mailer never did another conventional thing. He studied Marxism in Paris, rejected it for a Trotskyite position on Russia's state capitalism and America's monopoly capitalism; then turned on to jazz and dope, became a 'white negro'; got sacked as a Hollywood scriptwriter by Sam Goldwyn; stood for New York mayor; was a militant on America's war with Vietnam; espoused feminism; got involved heavily in democratic politics in the 60s; took up prisoners' rights in the 70s and in the 80s helped the ill-fated Jack Abbott.

The cartoonist Jules Feiffer, who is a pal of Mailer's, says that he was always 'earlier than anybody to pick up advance notes on



what was coming'. Yet, as another gr friend of Mailer's says, the French intell tual Jean Malaquais, this nose – his 'l philosophy' – for the latest happeni doesn't extend to a feel for its significan Always 'Norman will be there with theory' but usually one that had no stayi power or substance. Yet I take Malaqu judgement on Mailer: '. . . he stands c as the most gifted and by far the m versatile of his generation'.

Mailer's a *homme engage* who, especia if there is a buck to be made out of it, w always take up an underdog's cause. Y his vitality, goodwill, ability to surpri and talent as a writer are compensati enough for his mistakes and flaws. T anecdote that I felt best sums him up is t by someone who, when borrowing mon off Norman, noted that Mailer wou never hit a man when he was down, or when he was up. Keep it up Norman.

John McVic

Sex Symbols

Sexuality and Its Discontents. Meanings, Myt and Modern Sexualities
Jeffrey Weeks *Routledge* £6.95

There can be no consensus on sexu politics at the moment; there can be agreement on what we mean by sex. This a clear lesson to be drawn from Jeffr Weeks' new book. Why this is so has roots in our own history, in the maj historical forces which have shaped sexu ity and which we continue to live out in t present. The task of assessing those forc is central to Weeks' project. History used here neither as lesson nor as politic celebration, but as a powerful tool understand how our own dilemmas ha arisen. This sees the present as historic it is a major part of the book's success.

The problem is, history is as contentio as present-day sexual politics. Wee argues, following Foucault, that 'mode

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uality' is in major part the work of the ologists, those nineteenth and early entieth-century male experts who codi- d our pleasures and behaviours, regulat- 'normal' and 'perverse' identities ough the power of biological science. is of course is far from established 'fact'. stands as only one interpretation of the iod, which Weeks uses as a carefully lged polemic, designed to point us to ecific questions about the current poli- al situation. For Weeks, sexology's session with individualising sexual ntity, with the definition of perversity, h the norm of heterosexuality, remains major issue for present day sexual litics. Thus he argues that questions of ual choice, of the affirmation of radical ntities, need to form a central part of the ion for a new social utopia.

I would dispute both the historical inter- etation and the political conclusion. If take the turn of the last century as a icial moment in crystallising sexual de- itions, then the major issue was the hard ght battle between women and men er sexual power. Who had the right to eak about and control sex? Whether we rn to the professions, to struggles over gislation, or to the burgeoning feminist ovement, it was this deep structure hich predominated over other factors. his, I believe, is also the key to unlocking r present day discontents. How can we t together a new historic settlement ound sexual relations in a way that places e problem of male sexuality firmly on the olitical agenda?

This question relates to another im- ediate political problem with which Jef- ey Weeks opens his whole discussion – mely the resurgence of the moral Right. eeks is correct to insist that it is mis- ided to see moral authoritarianism simp- as an officially engineered panic. The w moralists tap fears and anxieties inhe- nt in 60s permissiveness and channel em rightwards.

But how are we to forge a series of ogressive alliances which can challenge ese images of the Right? Even more fficult, how can such alliances impress the traditional (male) Left the urgent ed to take sexual politics seriously? For liances to hold they cannot simply be uck together by the political glue of agmatism; they need a language and a rategy to articulate demands and capture arts and minds. The real question is: ow is that language to be defined?

For Weeks the answer is clear cut. It must be a radical pluralism based on an acceptance of diversity and choice, avoiding moral absolutes and any prescriptions about 'correct' sexual behaviour. This is a direct and controversial statement of position and faith, and the author is to be respected for the totality of his commitment to this pluralist position.

But my response was an immediate sense of unease. In what ways does this pluralism differ from the humanist tolerance of 60s liberals or from libertarianism? Both of which reinstated traditional norms of male-defined sexuality into their sexual utopias – often at women's expense. The difference is, we are told, that a radical pluralism is aware of the network of power relations in which sex is embedded. It thus makes informed choices about sexual practice in the light of this criterion. At one level I was willing to be persuaded, but the lack of discussion of male sexuality left me unconvinced.

Men are a central problem for progressive alliances around sexuality. It is not just left puritanism or economic reductionism which are the barriers to sexual progress. Straight men on the Left may give passive support to feminism or to lesbian and gay struggles, but there is no sign that they are initiating a debate about their own sexuality. The silence here is deafening. It is not that men – unified and monolithic – are the source of all sexual oppression. As Weeks warns us, the tendency to reduce power back to one single source (whether it be economic forces, patriarchy or biology) has been a major stumbling block for progressive sexual politics.

The other major linked theme of the book is the politics of pleasure and desire. Here Weeks draws on Freudian psychoanalysis to theorise the relation between desire and the social; between the way sexual ideologies address us as men and women, 'normal' and 'deviant', and their effects at the level of lived experience. The result is a sensitive reformulation of the society/individual equation. There is, Weeks insists, a third term in the debate, that of unconscious desire moulded by social and historical processes but with its own specific rules and structures of power.

Politically this issue of 'dangerous desires' is explored through the 'front-line' of sexual radicalism: sado-masochism, intergenerational sex and gay promiscuity. While not disputing that these issues throw up important political questions, I also longed for some discussion of other, more popular and less esoteric languages which may have progressive potential: the radical celibacy of the Smiths and Boy George, feminist efforts to rework the sexual content of romance and fashion, the interplay between sex and friendship.

Going beyond the current impasse in sexual relations certainly means reassessing pleasures and desires hitherto strictly regulated. But it also surely involves dethroning the meanings which define what is and what isn't sexual. Blurring the boundaries of the erotic a little, rather than always fixing on the time-honoured insignia of perversity, may prove a more effective way of challenging the majestic edifice we know as sex.

Frank Mort

Immigrant Husbands

Worlds Apart: Women Under Immigration and Nationality Law
Women, Immigration and Nationality Group
Pluto Press £4.95

Sex discrimination in Britain's immigration laws is normally a subject of only minority interest even to many of those most involved in campaigning against unjust and inhumane immigration and nationality policies. But the issue has been catapulted into prominence by the recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights that the ban on foreign husbands of women settled in Britain has violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

This book provides valuable background material which shows how extensive is the sex discrimination which the court condemned. It provides a detailed analysis of the way in which women are particular victims of immigration and nationality laws, and an account of women's resistance, and their contribution to changes in the law.

The major weakness of the court's rul-

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ing was that it was based on the existence of sex discrimination. It did not accept the plaintiffs' view that they had been victims of race discrimination. But in fact the immigration rules did discriminate on racial grounds: they required that before a woman could be joined in Britain by a husband from abroad she had to show that she was a citizen of this country born here, or with a parent born here; this requirement excluded the husbands of some black women even if they were UK citizens, but left white women unaffected. However the court ruled solely on the grounds of sex discrimination.

The Government's response to this limited ruling is predictable. Although settled women will now have a chance of living here with a husband from abroad all wives coming to join men settled here will be subjected to the extra degrading tests which husbands currently face. Thus under the guise of complying with the court's judgement they have furthered their overriding aim of reducing black immigration.

This might have been less easy for the Government to do if there had been a concerted campaign against both race and sex discrimination in the immigration rules. The anti-racist movement has paid little heed to how sex discrimination is used to increase the effectiveness of racist laws; at the same time campaigns against sexism and women's oppression have ignored the critical issues of immigration and nationality policy.

There is no body of British law which contains such overt discrimination against women and it is extraordinary that the women's movement has ignored this question almost completely. The book shows that women's organisations have been active in campaigning for legal change when white women are affected – but that black women, the main victims of immigration law and practice, have not been able to depend on the women's movement for support.

The authors face squarely the contradictions for feminists who recognise that the family is a source of women's oppression. They argue that it is not for the state to divide families against their wishes, and that in a racist society the family can be a source of support and strength for those under attack by the state.

But they also show how the law ignores the range of relationships that women c choose – the nuclear family is the c relationship recognised in the immigra laws. And within this structure, wor are always treated as appendages of m This means, ironically, that it is easier black women to come and settle in Bri that black men because of their depend status. Yet because they lack independ rights, their families cannot join th here.

There is a crucial debate in Brita ailing women's movement about the r vance of feminism to black women. Bl women have complained that their c cerns are ignored by feminists, and t anti-racist action is given no priority by women's movement. Racist immigrat and nationality laws form a critical par the oppression of black women. This b is an essential tool for women who wan understand these laws in order to be abl fight them. Unless the women's movem concerns itself with the humiliation a degradation experienced by women cau in the tangle of racist laws, and campai for change, there can be no anti-ra feminism.

Fiona Mactagg

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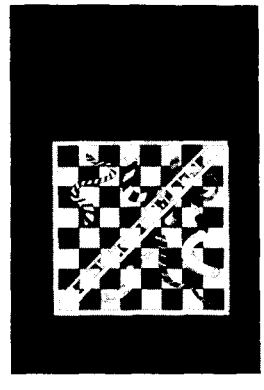

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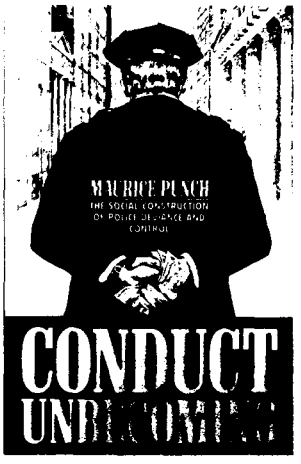

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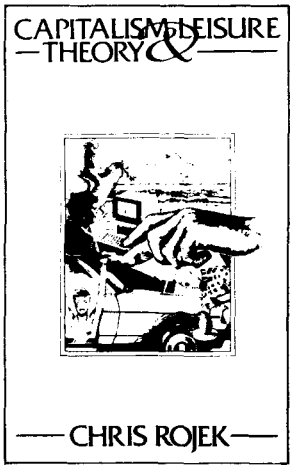

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'The Road to Ruin' video was made for the Sheffield Bus Campaign, by Steel Bank Films with finance from Sheffield City Council.

VIEWPOINT

- **Irene Bruegel and Ariane Hegewisch discuss implications of changes in the workforce.**
- **Paul Thompson probes Militant's machine.**
- **Monty Johnstone goes back to Communist Party ro**

IRENE BRUEGEL and ARIANE HEGEWISCH
Part-time work

Veronica Beechey (*MT* August) has encapsuled changes in the British workforce very usefully. But from our work on the London Labour Plan we think that some of the ideas need further development to relate them more directly to the concerns of the labour movement.

The first point we would like to emphasise is the need to distinguish between voluntary part-time work and enforced part-time work. In other words it is important to recognise the difference between the rights of workers to part-time work or job sharing, and moves by employers to organise work on a part-time basis. Certainly in Britain the vast majority of part-time workers are women, and certainly the increase in public sector and service employment which fuelled the growth of part-time work did enable mothers of school age and younger children to take paid jobs. But while part-time work in the 60s and early 70s arguably developed to draw in a new labour supply of women with childcare responsibilites, the current increase in part-time jobs is not supply led.

There are many women who work part-time but do not have dependent children. Indeed, recent studies on redundancy show that many women switch to part-time employment after losing their full-time jobs because these are the only options available. This trend is not limited to women; men's share of part-time work in recent years has risen to 20% from almost nothing. Secondly, the shift to part-time jobs has not been limited to the splitting of full-time jobs: for many women it has also meant a shortening of available part-time hours. An estimated 40% of part-time workers now earn less that £35 per week and thus will not have their National Insurance contributions paid for them, and will not show up in most statistics (Hilary Land, *New Statesman*, May 1985).

Any worker whatever their sex should be in a position to work whatever set of hours suit her or him, especially since almost every job can be done as efficie on a part-time basis. But we neec recognise that the choice of how m hours to work might be a very constrai one; constrained on the one side by adequate child care provisions and c strained in the other direction by the n to earn enough money. The trade ur movement has until now, as Veroi observes, neglected demands for sho working hours. But this has partly b because overtime bans and shorter wc ing hours may cut living standards. M of those who work long and increas hours, do so because that is the only wa make an adequate living. Any policy t really wants to change the relative posit of men and women has to go beyond distribution of hours to include policies income distribution and childcare fac ties.

The alternative is to follow the traditi al, and in principle correct, demand shorter hours with no loss of pay. I period of capitalist crisis, the experienc Britain and Europe with such a dem has however been that shorter hours h brought a greater intensity of work and a result, very little true increase in jobs leisure time or men's part of dome work.

Secondly we have to unravel the re tionship between part-time and casual e ployment. All too often the Left equa the two, but for individual women th may be nothing temporary at all ab their part-time jobs. Part-time work such does not casualise areas of work. the public sector part-time work has of gone hand in hand with long term regu employment, and with significant creases in trade unionisation. Neverthel the current increase of part-time empl ment, almost exclusively in the private, indeed privatised, sector of the econon has gone hand in hand with a grow casualisation of employment and a mc towards self employment. Howe casualisation through self-employment l increased apace in very different areas work: professional, artistic and skil manual work.

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'he issue for the labour movement is t both casual and part-time employ- ıt are growing in areas which have ually remained outside of trade union anisation. Any positive labour response he shift towards part-time work has to 't by looking very closely at the actual s which are offered on a part-time basis: paid, with few recognised skills, and, he private sector, in industries which e a low level of trade union organisa- ı. But more than that, the shift toward t-time and casualised work also means a 't in employment towards those sectors he economy which are inherently more 'icult to organise and might need very v ways of organising.

t therefore is not sufficient to simply nand that part-timers should be given ıal rights with full-time workers. The l need is to tackle the problem of anisation in workplaces, which might fairly small, where working conditions fairly individualised, where there is a h turnover of staff and often an incen- : to work 'off the books'. In industries : retailing, for example, unions have to :ecruit a third of their members each r. Somehow strategies have to be de- ɔped to organise industries like cleaning :atering, and these have to start out by ognising that these employ mainly men and ethnic minorities.

Jnder the impact of Tory free market icies unions have come a long way in ognising the need for a statutory floor to ges and there is an obvious role for a ıgressive state to assist workers in these as of employment to organise effective- We hope that the GLC has also begun to nonstrate that there are a variety of ys in which the local state, by support- specialised trade union resource cen- s or by using its powers as a landlord or :chaser for example, can contribute to a orous labour response to the changing ıcture of work and the workforce. Such esponse is urgently called for to take ay the initiative on cutting hours from ployers. But only a response which es such a broad view on the shift in rking hours will enable people to make a ıuine choice about the hours of work y do.

UL THOMPSON
litant's machine

Williams' description of Liverpool's itics and the role of the Militant ıdency (*MT* August) provided a useful ımary of the current position. I want to take up and qualify one of the central points it makes. Ian says that Militant's control of the party is shifting from *ideology* to *machine patronage*. Having had lengthy experience of a ward in which political loyalty was frequently cemented by the distribution of jobs and positions, I couldn't dissent from the identification of this problem. Indeed it is one of the major factors undermining Labour's credibility in the city.

But it has always been too easy to attribute Militant's domination to its organisational capacity. Militant exercises political hegemony because it promotes and *shares* an ideology which has a very great appeal to large numbers of party activists. This ideology is essentially a combination of *extreme workerism*, or if you prefer class reductionism; old-fashioned top-down labourism; and unbending anti-capitalism. Any identifiable form of Trotskyism plays little or no public role. That is why a formal analysis and critique of Militant's brand of Trotskyism, much loved by other Marxists, doesn't really get to grips with 'Militant Merseyside'.

On the surface it seems strange that in a city with so little work, that workerism is the key element. But Militant's neanderthal position and the council's abysmal practice on issues of race and gender is argued on a straight 'dividing the working class' line. This line does not have to be pushed at many party activists, it echoes their own values and images of a male white working class. If it does not promote racism and sexism, it certainly *tolerates* it in the Labour Party Young Socialists and a number of wards.

Militant's wider positions such as their absurd belief that there is a pure working class in Palestine, Ireland or Argentina that will (given the correct leadership) solve all political problems falls on receptive ears. I wish I'd got a quid for every time I've heard 'you've got no faith in the working class, comrade'. 'Petty-bourgeois' is the first insult the new Tendency intake learns and it is applied indiscriminately to all opponents, though from a scientific Marxist view it miraculously fails to apply to affluent social workers such as Derek Hatton.

Ian obliquely but accurately describes Militant's labourism as 'civic commandism'. They and their allies are absolutely hostile on ideological and organisational grounds to any initiative that comes from outside the party such as housing cooperatives. The Labour Party and the trade unions *are* the working class. Anything else is described as a sectional and of parochial interest.

Liverpool council's record in defending jobs and services is an admirable one. But that slogan is not enough. Unless it takes on board the *politics of service delivery*, Labour's electoral future is bleak, as recent bye-elections have shown. These factors indicate why the right wing rump on the district Labour Party feel able to vote with Militant and their allies on these issues against the rest of the Left. It also helps to explain the particular appeal of Militant to the self-interest and self-image of some of the members from local authority trade unions, many new to wider political activity. The third element, anti-capitalism, is of course a different matter. Despite some knee-jerk oppositionalism it is a great source of vitality and appeal, particularly to young people, in a city devastated by capitalism.

Unlike the situation in other labour-controlled authorities this ideology has proved a potent force and helps explain why the new Left in Liverpool is relatively isolated. The non-stop crisis of the council's existence has understandably prevented much-needed debate. There are signs of tension and dissension in the dominant majority and within the middle ground largely related to that crisis. Amongst the power brokers the argument is between realists and ideologues, with Militants and non-Militants in both camps. Middle ground worries have so far been largely confined to style and tactics rather than broader politics.

The task of the new Left is threefold. To support the council in its battle against the Tory government, something which the local Communist Party has been at best ambiguous on; to construct a majority on specific issues such as decentralised service delivery, racism and sexism; and promote a longer-term realignment of the Labour Left tying in to national developments.

MONTY JOHNSTONE
History lessons

Noreen Branson's *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain 1929-1941* appears at a time when the party is undergoing the deepest crisis in its history, and its role and future is the subject of increased debate on the Left and attention by the media. As John Saville pointed out in his review (*MT* August), Noreen Branson's book provides us with 'both new material and the beginnings of the discussion of old problems not previously debated in communist circles, at least in print.'

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One of the sharpest controversies in and around the Communist Party is about different conceptions of internationalism. It seems to me that Noreen Branson's *History* points to some important lessons for us today on this issue.

The Communist Party's genuine, practical and active internationalism runs like a red thread through the book. It brings to life the party's campaigns for friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, its mobilisation of solidarity with republican Spain and its initiation of the International Brigade, as well as its direct help to liberation and working class movements in the British Empire.

At the same time Branson's *History* illustrates the damaging effects of an uncritical and misguided form of 'internationalism', which entailed communists convincing themselves of the correctness at every stage of the advice and actions of the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist International.

Such an attitude was understandable at the time, when it was the practice of the whole international communist movement. What is less understandable is the position of those who, despite the revelations of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956 and in defiance of historical experience, take such an uncritical and fundamentally un-Marxist attitude today.

Three of the most harmful examples of this misconceived 'internationalism' are spotlighted by Noreen Branson's book.

Firstly, she devotes two chapters to the turn taken in 1928-29, which led to the party adopting a left sectarian line, which condemned the Labour Party as a 'social fascist' capitalist party and substituted for the immediate communist objective of a Labour government the totally unrealistic slogan of a 'revolutionary workers' government'.

Secondly, the book deals with the overturning in the autumn of 1939 of the party's initial support for the war against Nazi Germany in favour of one opposing it as imperialist and unjust and calling for immediate peace negotiations to end it.

In both these cases the previous realistic policies of the majority of the party's leadership were reversed under pressure from the Communist International in Moscow.

After initial opposition and hesitation the new line was adopted and overwhelmingly accepted by the membership. For the great majority it was not a case of implementing communist international discipline whilst reserving their opinion, but arose from what Noreen Branson describes as 'a deep-rooted conviction that the collective opinion of the world's leading Marxists was more likely to be correct than not.'

Experience was to demonstrate the perils of operating on such an assumption. Thus the turn of 1928-29 led the party into decline and isolation, from which it was only able fully to break out, in ways graphically described in the *History*, after the change to the unity line finally approved by the Communist International in 1935.

The third example of the danger of presupposing the Soviet leadership to be right rather than independently investigating the facts can be seen in the party's defence of the four Moscow Trials of 1936-38. At these, top Soviet political and military leaders were condemned to death for allegedly plotting against the Soviet state and acting in collusion with fascist powers. As Noreen Branson shows, party members at the time firmly believed the charges, since until 1956 'the idea that the new socialist society . . . could itself generate new forms of oppression was something which no communist countenanced.'

The party's defence of these trials undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on its very important campaign for a united fr with the Labour Party, as Harold Lask prominent Labour supporter of un noted in 1937.

Already at the time evidence was av able which cast doubt on the validity of trials. However, it was the official reh: litation by the Soviet Union in 1957 o those condemned at one of these trials (t of the generals) and subsequently of sc of the key defendants in the other three whose court confessions the conviction many of the others depended, which c clusively showed these trials to have b frame-ups.

Yet even today we find people who, the Bourbons, have neither forgotten a thing nor learnt anything and, choosin; ignore the overwhelming contrary e dence, still attempt to justify the tria presumably because, regrettably, Soviet authorities have not yet seen officially to revise three of them.[1]

The honest and absorbing account gi by Noreen Branson of the experienc both positive and negative, of some of most important years of the party's hist provides an essential background to p sent debates in and about the Commu Party, which it is to be hoped will stimul the widest reading and discussion of timely and valuable book.

[1] See eg *New Worker* journalist Denver Walk curious concoction of fact, falsehood and fri ity, *Quite Right, Mr Trotsky!* (Harney and Jo London, 1985) pp30-31.

We welcome your contributions to th Viewpoint section subject to availabl space. Please write not more than 60 words and send it to the editorial offic by September 9. Please enclose description of yourself for our Notes o Contributors.

CHILE IN SEPTEMBER

Aug. 31: Holly Near in concert, Camden Centre, WC1, £5/£3.50 from CSC
Sept. 11: Picket, Chile Embassy, all day till 8pm 12 Devonshire St, W1.
Public meeting on Human Rights 8pm Conway Hall, WC1 CCHR. 01-837 7561
Sept. 14: NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION, 2pm, Temple Place, WC2, to Jubilee Gdns. Music, speakers etc.

Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd., London, N7 7QU. 01-272 4298

HISTORY WORKSHOP CENTRE FOR SOCIAL HISTORY

The Politics of Work
A History of Work Group workshop
19th – 20th October, 1985
Ruskin College, Walton Street, Oxford

Papers by: C. Hall, S. Alexander, C. Cockburn, K. McClelland, M. Savage, H. Benyon, P. Thompson, T. Lane, R. E. Pahl

For more tickets and information contact:
History Workshop Centre for Social History,
Ruskin College,
Oxford. OX1 2HE. Tel: 0865 56041.

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Letters

MUNIST HISTORY

ing John Saville's review of en Branson's *History of the nunist Party of Great Britain -41* I was filled with a deep of dismay at the opportunity h was missed.

long last we have a history of xciting years of the 1930s when arty threw off the narrow sec- nism of the 'class against class' d and was able to take a variety ajor political initiatives. De- its small size (though its mem- ip grew rapidly) it succeeded mulating powerful movements g the unemployed, among ts, against Mosley's fascism, in ort of Republican Spain, and st the Chamberlain policy of asement. It made a major con- tion to the building of work- organisation and to the streng- ing of militant trade unionism; was largely responsible for the d of Marxism among students professional people

e book also contains a frank very interesting account of the against class period and of the ult years 1939-41.

stead of discussing how it was ble for so much to be achieved e 1930s, when the international nunist movement was inspired e strategy of building a broad fascist people's front (put for- at the seventh congress of the intern), John Saville devotes of his review to saying what is n the book, or what is not dealt adequately. In one case he is ly wrong. He says the book d have included an account of ational leftwing movement and rupt ending in 1929.' But this lly dealt with in chapters one to .

seems to me that Noreen Bran- book is essential reading for ne who wants to grapple with problem of developing a strategy he advance to socialism in Bri- and of the part to be played in by a revolutionary party based Marxism.

Roger Simon, London

EQUAL CONTEST

exchange between Ferdinand nt and Gareth Steadman Jones July] reminded me of an old I have had, but never seen ussed. This concerns a very c asymmetry between socialist capitalist ideological work.

riefly, and therefore crudely, alists are expected to design an native future or stand conde- d. Conservatives are not. For n the future does not need a ification. Free enterprise will te it. In other words only the ns of development or of evolu- needs deciding.

The detail of creating the future, in the conservative version, can be left largely to the few hundred directors of multinational or large or key companies and their market operations and other modes of interplay. Naturally, their deliberations are secret.

Whether on any scale, nationally or internationally, these processes involve any grand design or long-range planning is something else which, implicitly in the rightist account, is none of the politicians' – or voters' – business.

Meanwhile, to start correcting the imbalance, cannot left polemicists turn these questions around, ask conservative opponents who is designing our future now, how is this designing subject to democratic influence; is in fact the buy/don't buy option a sufficient participation for citizens of the consumerist society, in macro as well as micro trends, and the exploitation of human and natural resources.

Oliver Owen, Hove, Sussex

WHITE RACISM

When will *Marxism Today* have a major article on racism? Will it be within my lifetime (I'm ageing fast – 23 already)? Does *Marxism Today* believe racism isn't on the political agenda? Does it have *any* readers in Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bradford or Wolverhampton? Does it not think the topic of 'Black Sections' would be more sensibly termed 'White Racism'?

Having dipped a foot in the water concerning Black people only in areas of entertainment (Benjamin Zephaniah interview, 1985) and sport (Black Footballers, 1983), does *Marxism Today* believe it offers a view any different to *The Mail on Sunday*?

It's so charming to peruse the tribulations of these folk in Southern Africa, Grenada, Central America, but rather less exotic to deal with the deformity of your own character, your own labour movement and your own political parties, isn't it? (I use the term 'your' because these things don't seem to have much to do with me or any other Blacks in Britain). At least I know where I stand with the *Mail on Sunday*.

Sandra Dunkley, Dudley, West Midlands

REAL WORLD MEGASTAR

In the last twelve months, Bruce Springsteen has publicly condemned Ronald Reagan, quietly but assertively associated himself with the NUM, and released a best-selling album that deals with the other side of the American dream – unemployment, poverty, alienation and the legacy of Vietnam.

Yet Graham McCann (*MT* July) questions Springsteen's 'commitment to our world'. Admittedly, Springsteen is no Marxist ideologue (he might not be so popular if he were) but the world he inhabits is rather more real than that inhabited by your average media megastar. Incidentally, his concerts also happen to be extremely entertaining and very good fun.

Graham concludes with the line 'I saw Bruce Springsteen's future and its name is rock 'n' roll' – hardly surprising given the fact that he is the greatest rock 'n' roll singer of his generation. Or perhaps, now that he is a highly bankable star, Springsteen should give it all up, and come and write some ideologically pure articles for *Marxism Today*?

John Fallon, Penge, London

INGLORIOUS GARDEN

In an otherwise very penetrating study of the problems facing the arts, I think Colin Chambers (*MT* July) may be mistaken in taking the Arts Council's 'Glory of the Garden' as a positive document which the Left ought to endorse. It has been consistently presented as such by its authors, in particular Sir William Rees Mogg. The reality is somewhat different, I think, and there is a danger in being taken in by the apparently egalitarian and 'radical' rhetoric of its promoters.

Although there is a strong argument for increasing regional spending on the arts as a proportion of the whole, what has actually happened is that money has been taken from London, often from radical companies, and given to regional activities, often with lower standards and little or no social or political committment. Companies like 7·84, in the theatre, which have strong labour movement connections, have been axed, while regional reps have benefitted.

Underlying this is a subtle ideolocial motivation, which Sir William has more or less openly stated in the television debate he had in May with Sir Peter Hall and others, to break what he sees as the 'elitism' of London where close links exist between, in the theatre at any rate, the radical fringe and the drama departments of radio and television that form mass culture. He wants, in line with general Thatcherite ideology, a populist reaction, where culture is provincialised, tuned to middle brow, middle class tastes. It is a version of the 'introduction of market forces' arguments that are familiar elsewhere, only in this case the enemy is not public ownership as such, but what is seen as a monopoly of London-based radicals. The Left should clearly reject 'The Glory of the Garden' for these reasons, until far more resources become available for the arts in general.

James Pettifer, London N19

VANISHING SOCIALISM

Can socialism be rescued? Asks Ferdinand Mount [*MT*, July]. Is there enough left of it to be worth reconstructing as a working model? Or has it substantially vanished already?

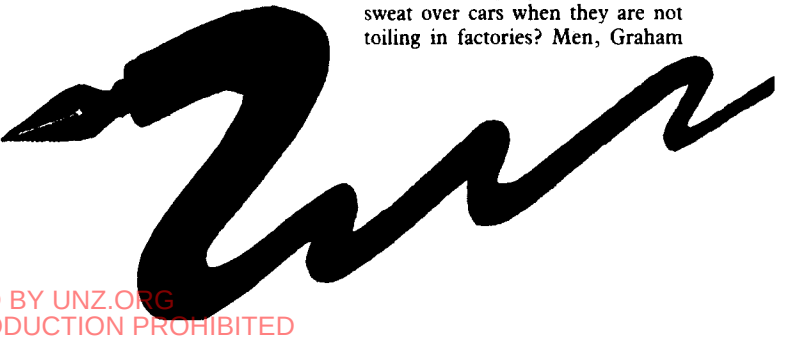
As he confines his inquiry to this country and the discussions in such journals as *Marxism Today*, it can readily be conceded that socialism has vanished already. Everything said in reply by Gareth Steadman Jones confirms this judgement. Indeed, he fits neatly into *both* categories described by Mount: those who 'stop short of elaborating the new socialism in any detail', and those who discuss how to 'win support', 'broaden fronts' and 'forge alliances', but 'do not go in for discussing what all these fronts and alliances are for'.

Not a hint, from either party to the discussion, that there are countries where socialism is not only discussed but put into effect. Perhaps there were times when such countries went off the rails, but when was this country ever on them, or when will it ever be if our latter-day Marxists remain so insular in their thinking? Is Thatcherism so unique a phenomenon that nothing can be learned from elsewhere? It's time that our mentors took their blinkers off.

Joe Marks, Walthamstow, London

RACING MEN

Nice to see an intelligent article about the Boss (*MT* July) and to discover *Marxism Today's* commitment to non-sexist language – but really! So Springsteen writes about working class 'people' who race and sweat over cars when they are not toiling in factories? Men, Graham



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McCann, not people, or hadn't you noticed the traditional nature of Springsteen's views on gender roles?

Linda McDowell, Milton Keynes

NOUGHT TO BLAME

Could someone please look at charts from the point of view of the reader. In Neil Pettinger's study of the opera (*MT* July) the chart's vertical axis goes from 500,000 to 9,000,000 – all those noughts stretching to infinity! Would it not be more comprehensible to go from 0.5 to 9.0 millions? The credit for the chart goes to the Arts Council. Was it their fault?

Gerald Hartup, London SE5

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Stuart Hood is a writer and broadcaster.
John Grahl is a lecturer in economics at Queen Mary College, London and a member of the Communist Party's Economic Committee.
Victoria Brittain is the editor of the *Guardian*'s Third World Review.
Peter Parker is a freelance financial journalist.
Jonathan Steele is joint author with Ruth First and Christabel Gurney of *The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid.*
■ For *trade union* roundtable participants see p 14.
Lucy Bland is writing a book on the history of female sexuality.
David Edgar is a playwright whose works include *Destiny* and *Maydays.*
■ For *black sections roundtable* participants see p 31.
Alan Bairner teaches politics at the University of Ulster.
Ken Worpole's latest book was *Reading by Numbers.* He currently works at the Greater London Enterprise Board.
Ian Williams is a member of the Liverpool Labour Party and writes for *New Statesman* and *Tribune.*
John McVicar is a freelance journalist.
Frank Mort is a research assistant at the University of East Anglia. His book, *Dangerous Sexualities* will be published next year.
Fiona Mactaggart is general secretary of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.
Irene Bruegel and Ariane Hegewisch work at the Industry and Employment Branch of the Greater London Council. They write in a private capacity here.
Paul Thompson is chair of the Merseyside Labour Coordinating Committee and stood as a candidate in the 1984 Liverpool city council elections.
Monty Johnstone is a member of the National Executive Committee of the CP.

We welcome your letters for the October issue. They should be no longer than 250 words and arrive at the office not later than September 9 The editor reserves the right to cut letters.

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■ Collets International Bookshop, 129/131 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0EQ. General books, especially paperbacks. Russian and Slavonic books and journals (in Russian and English from the USSR). Also specialising in Peace, Feminism, Art, Film and Media. EFL, OU and BBC publications. Travel and Guidebooks. Music. Classical and Folk records (including Melodiya). Posters and Badges. Tel: 01-734 0782/3

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■ For a list of radical bookshops in Britain send a s.a.e. to: **Federation of Radical Booksellers,** c/o Single Step, 78A Penney St. Lancaster LA1 1XN.

■ Economists Bookshop, Clare Market, Portugal St., WC2. Tel. 01 405 5531. Specialising in the social sciences, including socialist and feminist studies; magazines; pamphlets; second hand department.

■ **Peoples Bookshop, (Newcastle),** 189 Westgate Road, NE4 6AA. For all your progressive reading. Marxism, Labour movement, peace and feminism plus periodicals.

MISCELLANEOUS

■ Back numbers of *Marxism Today* for sale, 1973–1981. Tel. 01-393-1912.

PUBLICATIONS

Radical Scotland, Scotland's top political magazine, bi-monthly. 70p. 36pp. Socialism; radicalism; Home Rule. Annual subscriptions £5.40. From 1 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LW.

■ Labour Leader – Socialist arguments and analysis from the grass roots of the Labour left. FREE sample copy or £4.50 annual subscription from ILP, 49 Top Moor Side, Leeds LS11 9LW.

EVENTS

■ Arthur Scargill addresses t Haldane Society. 27th September, 7.15pm. Conw Hall, Red Lion Square, Lon WC1. All welcome. Entran 50p/£1/£1.50.

■ **Prospects for the Left in Britain.** Marxism Today Forc with Cllr. Jack Turner, Gordan Will (NUPE) and Nina Temple (CPGB). Sat. Sept 28th, 3pm. Sutton Community Centre, Telford. Followed by evening concert Further information from De Ellwand Tel: (0952 48284).

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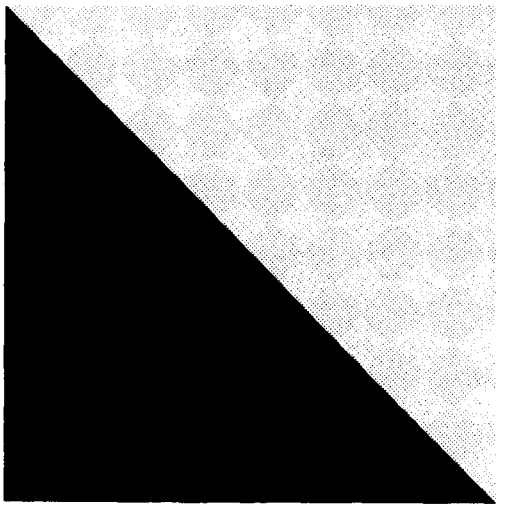
e like to do new things — whether it's creating radio commercials with ople like Whistle Test's Andy Kershaw and Capital Radio's Greg Edwards persuading the TUC and Labour Party to put out their latest policy tement using splashlight colour cover and some great cartoons.

ou are a councillor, trade unionist, a committee chair, or simply someone h vision, perhaps there is a way we can help you. For effective mmunications — Union Communications.

ay not call for an informal chat with no obligation. Keith Bill, Union mmunications, 01-837 6271.



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Update

NEWS

Women Alive A feminist event sponsored by *Marxism Today* is to be held in London next April. If you would like to help make this weekend a big success or find out more contact Tricia Davis (021-443 4450) or Mary Braithwaite (01-980 8692) or write to Women Alive, 16 St John St, London EC1M 4AY.

The International Brigade Memorial will be unveiled on Saturday 5 October at noon in Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, London SE1, by Michael Foot in the presence of Sr Tierno Galvan, Mayor of Madrid and GLC Chairman Tony Banks.

Images Against War A retrospective of 20 years' drawings, paintings and photomontages entitled 'Images of War' by the campaigning antiwar artist Peter Kennard is on display in the Barbican Centre (London), level 1 foyer until 30th of this month.

Paintings by Survivors An exhibition of paintings from survivors of Hiroshima which provide an eloquent testimony to events which hardly bear contemplation. Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 30 Pembroke St, Oxford until 29 September (0865 722733).

CAMPAIGNS

Save Child Benefit 50 organisations representing children, families, women, the churches, local authorities as well as trade unions and members of the poverty lobby have launched this campaign to save child benefit. Comments on these proposals should be sent to the Central Review Unit, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6DY by 16 Sept. Further information from Ruth Lister (CPAG) 01-242 9149.

Women in Nicaragua Container Appeal The advances for women since the Sandinista victory in 1979 are threatened by the US Government's efforts to distroy the Nicaraguan economy and finance armed aggression. War on Want with the support of the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign have launched this appeal to send medicine, clothes, toiletries, paper, health and education equipment, typewriters and clothes to them. You can help by: donating money; raising funds through local women's groups, churches, trade unions, political parties, solidarity and peace groups; Forming or joining local groups to raise money. Leaflets, posters and other materials for use at meetings etc are available from War on Want, Freepost, 1 London Bridge St, London SE1 9UT (01-403 2266).

EVENTS

Merseyside Demonstration against unemployment and social security cuts, 7 Sept. Assembling at Sefton Park at 10am to march to a rally at St Georges' Plateau. Speakers include MPs, councillors and trade union leaders. To be followed by 'Rock for Jobs' concert at the Bandstand, Sefton Pk from 4.00pm onwards. Bands include Redskins, The High Five, Barrington Levey. Compere: Janice Long (Radio 1). Organised by Merseyside trade union and labour movement and supported by local councils. contact (051 7093995).

Left Alive in 85 7-8 September. Bournemouth *Marxism Today* weekend festival with discussion forum, art exhibition, gala social. At the Community Arts Centre, 93 Haviland Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth. £3 for all events (£2 unwaged). Discussion sessions £1, social £2 (£1 unwaged). Send SAE for information to J Phillips, 37 Coronation Avenue, Bournemouth, Dorset.

12 Years of Anti-Dictatorial Struggle 11 Sept. Picket at the Chilean Embassy organised by Chile Democratico to support the people of Chile who want a return to democracy. Bring banners and friends. 12-2 at 12 Devonshire St, W1.

Women's Peace Weekend 14-15 Sept, Manchester Town Hall. Registration from 9am. Organised by women in CND, Women's Peace Alliance and Greenham Women. First national women's get-together, with workshops on a wide range of issues. Social Saturday night. Crêche. Facilities for disabled women. £5 waged, £2 unwaged. More information c/0 Manchester CND, 61 Bloom Street, Manchester M1 3LY.

CONFERENCES

Communist Student Council 6-7 Sept. A chance to be sociable, bounce ideas around, gather information and prepare for another revolutionary year. All CP students welcome. Further details and registration from the National Student Committee (01-251 4406).

The Practice of the Media 7 Sept. Third annual conference of the Association for Media Education in Scotland. Guest speaker Jeremy Isaacs. 10.45-4.30pm at the University of Aberdeen. Fee £8. Contact Coral Nivan 29 Gordan Rd, Mannufield, Aberdeen (0224 34274).

Unemployment and Poverty 28 Sept. One day school organised by Sussex Communist Party. Speakers: Paul Buggulay, Alan Booth, Danielle Stone. Creche and lunch available. Registration 10.00am at the Unemployed Centre, Tillery F Brighton. Fee £1.00 (50p unwa

MEETINGS

The future of the Left 12 : Public debate with Alok Bi (black activist) Nigel Stanley ecutive Labour Co-ordinating (mittee) and Nina Temple (E tive of Communist Party) 7.45p Hackney Asian Centre, 17-19 ston Lane, E8. All welcome. Ac sion free.

Cervical Cancer Screening Sept. Organised by Islington S & Finsbury Labour Party Wom Section. Discussion on how to vent unnecessary deaths. Speal Frank Dobson MP and Jean Rc son. Canonbury Court Ter Hall, off Halton Road, N1. 7.3(All welcome.

Liverpool Marxism Today, dis sion on unemployment with G Therborn and Keva Coon Saturday 28 Sept 11-4. For de see advertisement.

Entries for the October Up should be sent as soon as pos. (latest date September 9) to M Loftus, Marxism Today 16 St J Street London EC1M 4AY or 01-608 0265 or 01-249 9509 (e ings). Space is limited, so if want to guarantee that your ent published we suggest that you bo into our classified columns unde appropriate heading. Ring Ma Pople on 01-608 0265 for r details.

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1986 programme now in preparation will include five 17-day study tours between March and November, work brigade travel, and special tours at various dates.

Cuba

16-day study tours recommence with a theatre workers tour visiting Havana and the Trinidad region (Escambray Theatre) dep. 20th October, and the traditional Film Festival tour, dep. 10th November. Similar special and holiday tours planned for New Year, Easter and Summer 86.

Trans-Siberian to China and Japan

Independent or group travel, in co-operation with China National Youth Travel Corporation, via Moscow and trans-Siberian rail or air routes to Mongolia, Beijing or Tokyo, returning via Hong Kong or continuing to Australia or the US West Coast. From £265 one way to Reijing. 5 major tours of 18-21 days duration are planned for 1985 to Beijing, central, south and south-western China, returning from Hong Kong.

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Specialist travel

We specialise in organising group study tours and holidays with a purpose for student, labour movement or school groups, particularly to the USSR and Eastern Europe, Algeria, France, Italy and Cuba. Phone or write to Frank Norall or Landon Temple for details.

Russian language courses in the USSR

Moscow Autumn Course. Four weeks study in Moscow with tuition by the Intourist Pedagogical Section (associated with the Pushkin Institute), 16th November to 14th December. Facilities available for reading and research at the Lenin Library and other institutes.

Moscow New Year Course. Three weeks course from 20th December again under Intourist auspices.

1986 programme in preparation will include wide range of courses, from 3–12 weeks in duration organised in co-operation with Sputnik Student Travel Bureau, or Intourist, and based on universities or specialised language institutes in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk, Vladimir, Volgograd, Kharkov and Krasnodar.

SPECIAL OFFERS ●

PARIS

Fête de l'Humanité, 13th–16th September, by coach to one of the world's largest popular festivals, accommodation in twin rooms in student residence near the Sorbonne, multiple entrance ticket and visit to a champagne farm near Reims on the homeward journey, £63.

USSR

Half Term Tours for teachers (and anyone else), 20th–27th October and 15th–22nd February to Moscow and Leningrad with optional school and professional visits. Fully inclusive by air, £269 (October) and £259 (February).

Christmas and New Year. Away from the kitchen sink, to Moscow, Pskov, Leningrad, Novgorod, Vladimir and Suzdal, all featuring in a group of USSR tours covering Christmas or New Year, or both holidays; details on application.

PENSIONERS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL

A few places still remain on the last PPI Friendship Tour of 1985 to Moscow (3 nts), Sochi on the warm Black Sea Riviera (9 nts) and Leningrad (2 nts) at £364 including meetings and discussions on peace themes.

A new 1986 programme of PPI peace tours, renewing this year's visits to Romania and the USSR and extended to Italy, Spain, Hungary and other countries, is now in preparation.

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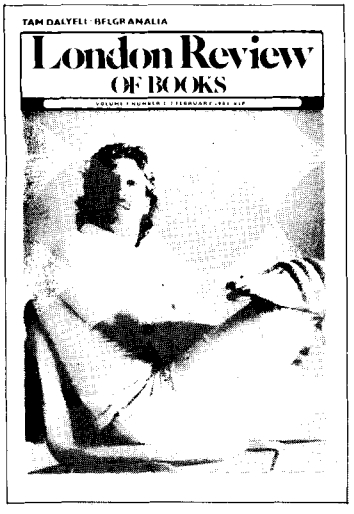

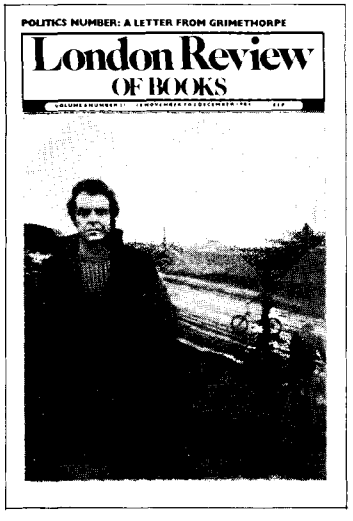

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Facts about the LRB

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